



ELOISA:

Or, a SERIES of

ORIGINAL LETTERS.



VOL. IV.

1535
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H. Gravé del.

A Breakfast in the English Taste.

Letter CXXXVII

Print

Vol. IV.
E L O I S A:

Or, a SERIES of
ORIGINAL LETTERS

Collected and published

By J. J. ROUSSEAU.

Translated from the FRENCH.

VOLUME IV.

A NEW EDITION.



L O N D O N:

Printed for T. BECKET and P. A. DE HONDT,
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E L O I S A.

L E T T E R CXL.

From Lord B——.



Find, by your two last letters, that a former one is missing, apparently the first you wrote me from the army, and in which you accounted for Mrs. Wolmar's secret uneasiness. Not having received that letter, I imagine it was in the mail of one of our couriers, who was taken; you will, therefore, be pleased to re-communicate its contents. I am at a loss to conjecture what they were, and am uneasy about them. For again, I say, if happiness and peace dwell not in Eloisa's mind, I know not where they will find an asylum on earth. You may make her easy, as to the dangers she imagines we are here exposed to; we have to do with an enemy too expert to suffer us to pursue him. With a handful of men, he baffles our attempts, and deprives

us of all opportunity to attack him. As we are very sanguine, however, we may probably raise difficulties which the best generals would not be able to surmount, and at length oblige the French to fight us. I foresee our first success will cost us dear, and that the victory we gained at Dettingen will make us lose one in Flanders. We make head against a very able commander. Nor is this all; he possesses the love and confidence of his troops, and the French soldiers, when they have a good opinion of their leader, are *invincible* *. On the contrary, they are good for so little when they are commanded by courtiers they despise, that frequently their enemies need only to watch the intrigues of the cabinet, and seize a proper opportunity, to vanquish with certainty the bravest people on the continent: this they very well know. The duke of Marlborough, taking notice of the good look and martial air of a French soldier, taken prisoner at the battle of Blenheim, told him, if the French army had been composed of fifty thousand such men as he, it would not have been so easily beaten: Zounds, sir, replied the grenadier, there are men enough in it like me, but it wants such a man as you. Now such a man at present commands the French troops, and is on our side wanting; but we have courage, and trouble ourselves little about that. At all events, however, I

* The translator cannot help observing, that it was extraordinary in Mr. Rousseau to put such a false, ridiculous, assertion in the mouth of an Englishman.

E L O I S A.

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intend to see their operations for the remainder of the campaign, and am resolved not to leave the army till it goes into winter-quarters. We shall all be gainers by such a delay, the season being too far advanced for us to think of crossing the mountains this year. I shall spend the winter with you, and not go to Italy 'till the beginning of the spring. Tell Mr. and Mrs. Wolmar I have thus changed my design, that I may have more time to contemplate that affecting picture you so pathetically describe, and that I may have also the opportunity to see Mrs. Orbe settled with them. Continue, my dear sir, to write with your usual punctuality, and you will do me a greater pleasure than ever: my equipage having been taken by the enemy, I have no books; but amuse myself in reading over your letters.

L E T T E R CXLI.

To Lord B——.

WHAT pleasure does your Lordship give me in acquainting me with your design of passing the winter with us at Clarens! but how dearly you make me pay for it by prolonging your stay at the army! What displeases me most, however, is to perceive that your resolution of making a campaign was fixed before we parted, though you mentioned nothing of it to me. I see, my Lord, your reason for keeping it a secret, and cannot be pleased with

you for it. Did you despise me so much as to think me unfit to accompany you? or have you ever known me mean enough to be attached to any thing I should prefer to the honour of dying with my friend? But if it was improper for me to follow you to the army, you should at least have left me in London; that would have displeased me less than your sending me hither.

By your last letter I am convinced that one of mine is indeed missing; the loss of which must have rendered the two succeeding ones in many respects obscure; but the necessary explanations to make them intelligible, shall be soon transmitted to you. What is at present more particularly needful, is to remove your uneasiness concerning that of Mrs. Wolmar.

I shall not take upon me to give you a regular continuation of the discourse we had together after the departure of her husband. Many things have since intervened that make me forget great part of it, and it was resumed at so many different times during his absence, that I shall content myself, to avoid repetition, with giving you a summary of the whole.

In the first place she told me, that Mr. Wolmar, who neglected nothing in his power to make her happy, was nevertheless the sole author of all her disquietude; and that the more sincere their mutual attachment grew, the greater was her affliction. Would you think it, my Lord? This gentleman so prudent, so reasonable, so little addicted to any kind of vice, so little subject to the tyranny of human passions, knows nothing of that faith which gives virtue all its
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merit;

merit ; and in the innocence of an irreproachable life, feels only at the bottom of his heart, the dreadful tranquillity of the unbeliever. The reflection which arises from this contrast, in principle and morals, serves but to aggravate Eloisa's grief ; she would think him even less culpable in disregarding the author of his Being, had he more reason to dread his anger, or presumption to brave his power. That the guilty should be led to appease their consciences at the expence of truth ; that the pride of thinking differently from the vulgar may induce others to embrace error, she can readily conceive ; but, continued she sighing, how a man so virtuous, and so little vain of his understanding, should be an infidel, surpasses my conception !

But before I proceed farther, it will be necessary to inform you of the peculiar character of this married couple. You are to conceive them as living solely for each other, and constantly taken up with their family ; it being necessary to know the strictness of the union subsisting between them, to comprehend how their difference of sentiments, in this one article, is capable of disturbing it. Mr. Wolmar, educated in the customs of the Greek church, was not one of those who could support the absurdity of such ridiculous worship. His understanding, superior to the feeble yoke imposed on it, soon shook it off with contempt ; rejecting, at the same time, every thing offered to his belief on such doubtful authority ; thus forced in a manner into impiety, he degenerates into Atheism.

Having resided ever since in Roman-catholic countries, he has never been induced to a better

opinion of christianity, by what he found professed there. Their religion, he saw, tended only to the interest of their priests; that it consisted entirely of ridiculous grimaces, and a jargon of words without meaning. He perceived that men of sense and probity were unanimously of his opinion, and that they did not scruple to say so; nay, that the clergy themselves, under the rose, ridiculed in private what they inculcated and taught in publick; hence he has often assured me that, after having taken much time and pains in the search, he never met with above three priests in his life that believed a God*.

By endeavouring to set himself to rights in these matters, he afterwards bewildered himself in metaphysical enquiries, and seeing only doubts and contradictions offer themselves on every side, advanced so far that, when he returned to the doctrines of christianity, he came too late, and incapable of either belief or conviction, the best arguments appeared to him inconclu-

* God forbid, that I should give sanction to assertions so rash and severe; I insinuate only, that there are people who make such assertions; and for whose indiscretion, the conduct of the clergy in every country and of all religions, often give but too much occasion. So far am I, however, from intending meanly to screen myself by this note, that my real opinion on this subject is, that no true believer can be a persecutor and an enemy to toleration. If I were a magistrate, and the law inflicted death on Atheists, I would begin to put it in execution, by burning the first man that should come to accuse and prosecute another.

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five. He finished his career, therefore, by equally opposing all religious tenets whatever; and was converted from Atheism only to become a Sceptic.

Such is the husband which heaven has destined to Eloisa; to her whose true faith and sincere piety cannot have escaped your observation; but to know how much her gentle soul is naturally inclined to devotion, requires that long intimacy with her in which her cousin and I have lived. It might be said, no terrestrial object being equal to her tenderness, her excess of sensibility is reduced to ascend to its source: not like a saint Theresa, whose amorous heart only changes its object: hers is a heart truly inexhaustible, which neither love nor friendship can drain; but whose affections are still raised to the only Being, worthy her ardent love*. Her love to God does not detach her from his creatures; it gives her neither severity nor spleen. But all her affections, proceeding from the same cause, and tempering each other, become more sweet and attracting; she would, I believe, be less devout, if her love toward her husband, her children, her cousin, and me were less than it is. What is very singular, also, is that she knows but little of her own heart; and even complains that she finds in herself, a soul barren of tenderness and inca-

* How! Will the deity take up with only the refuse of his creatures? Not so; all the love the human heart can possess for created beings is so little, that when they think it is replete, it is yet vacant; an infinite object only can possess it entirely.

pable of love to the sublimest object.—“ Do what you will, she often says, the heart is affected only by the interposition of the senses, or the assistance of the imagination ; and how shall we see or imagine the immensity of the Supreme Being †? When I would raise myself up to the deity, I know no longer where I am ; perceiving no relation between us, I know not how to reach him, I neither see nor feel any thing, I drop into a kind of annihilation ; and, if I may venture to judge of others by myself, I should apprehend the extasies of the mystics are no less owing to the fulness of the heart than the emptiness of the head.”

“ What must I do then, added she, to get rid of these delusions of a wandering mind ? I substitute a less refined worship, but within the reach of my comprehension, in the room of those sublime contemplations, which surpass my mental faculties. With regret I debase the majesty of the divinity, and interpose perceptible objects between the deity and my feeble

† It is certain, the mind must be fatigued by the unequal task of contemplating the deity. Such ideas are too sublime for the vulgar, who require a more sensible object of devotion. Are the Catholics to blame, then, in filling their legends, their calendars, and their churches, with little angels, cherubs, and handsome saints ? The infant Jesus, in the arms of his modest and beautiful mother, is one of the most affecting, and, at the same time, the most agreeable spectacles that christian devotion can present to the view of the faithful.

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senses ; not being able to contemplate his essence, I contemplate at least his works, and admire his goodness ; but whatever method I take, instead of that pure love and affection he demands, it is only an interested gratitude I have to offer him."

Thus, every thing is productive of sentiment in a susceptible mind ; the whole universe presenting to Eloisa, nothing but what is a subject for love and gratitude. On every side she sees and adores the benevolent hand of providence ; her children are pledges committed by it to her care ; she receives its gifts in the produce of the earth ; she sees her table covered by its bounty ; she sleeps under its protection ; she awakes in peace under its care ; she is instructed by its chastisements, is made happy by its favours : all the benefits she reaps, all the blessings she enjoys, are so many different subjects for adoration and praise. If the attributes of the divinity are beyond her feeble sight, she sees in every part of the creation, the common father of mankind. To honour thus the supreme benevolence, is it not to serve as much as possible an infinite Being ?

Think, my Lord, what pain it must give a woman of such a disposition, to spend a life of retirement with a man who, while he forms a part of her existence, cannot partake of that hope which makes her existence dear ; not to be able to join him in praise and gratitude to the deity, nor to converse with him on the blessed futurity we have to hope from his goodness ! to see him insensible, in doing good, to every thing which should make virtue agreeable to us ; and, with the strangest absurdity,

thinking like an infidel and acting as a christian. Imagine her walking abroad with her husband; the one admiring, in the beautiful verdure of spring, or golden fruits of autumn, the power and beneficence of the great Creator of all things; the other seeing in them nothing but a fortuitous combination of atoms, united only by chance. Imagine to yourself the situation of a married couple, having a sincere regard for each other, who, for fear of giving offence, dare not indulge themselves in such sentiments or reflections as the objects around them inspire; but who are bound in duty, even from their reciprocal affections, to lay themselves under continual restraint. Eloisa and I hardly ever walk out together, but some striking or picturesque object puts her in mind of this disagreeable circumstance. Alas! said she with great emotion to me one day, this beautiful prospect before us, so lively, so animating in our eyes, is a dead and lifeless scene in those of the unfortunate Wolmar. In all that harmony of created beings which nature displays, in vain do they unite to speak their Maker's praise: Mr. Wolmar perceives only a profound and eternal silence.

You who know Eloisa, who know what delight her communicative mind takes in imparting its sentiments; think what she must suffer by such constraint, even though it were attended with no other inconvenience, than that unsocial reserve which is peculiarly disagreeable between two persons so intimately connected. But Eloisa has much greater cause of uneasiness. In vain does she oppose those involuntary

tary terrors, those dreadful ideas that rush upon her mind. They return with redoubled force, and disturb every moment of her life. How horrid must it be for such an affectionate wife to think the supreme Being is the avenger of his offended attributes ! to think the happiness of him on whom her own depends must end with his life ; and to behold a reprobate of God in the father of her children ! All her sweetness of disposition can hardly preserve her from falling into despair at this horrible idea ; her religion only, which makes her feel for the infidelity of her husband, yielding her strength to support it. If heaven, says she sometimes, refuses me the conversion of this honest man, I have but one blessing to ask ; which is, that I may die before him.

Such, my Lord, is the too just cause of Eloisa's chagrin ; such is the secret affliction which preys on her mind, and is aggravated by the care she takes to conceal it. Atheism, which stalks abroad undisguised among the Papists, is obliged to hide its head in every country, where reason, giving a sanction to religion, deprives infidels of all excuse. Its principles are naturally destructive ; and, though they find partizans among the rich and great, who promote them, they are held in the utmost horror by an oppressed and miserable people ; who, seeing their tyrants thus freed from the only curb to restrain their insolence, comfort themselves with the hope of another life, their only consolation in this. Mrs. Wolmar, foreseeing the ill-consequences of her husband's scepticism, and being desirous to preserve her children from the bad effects of so

dangerous an example, prevailed on him to keep his principles a secret; to which she found no great trouble to persuade a man who, though honest and sincere, is yet discreet, unaffected, without vanity, and far from wishing to deprive others of a blessing which he himself cannot enjoy. In consequence of this, he keeps his tenets to himself; he goes to church with us; conforms himself to custom; and without making a verbal confession of what he does not believe, avoids giving scandal, and pays all that respect to the established religion of the country which the state has a right to demand of its citizens.

They have been married now almost eight years, during which time Mrs. Orbe only has been in the secret; nor probably would she of herself ever have discovered it. Such care indeed is taken to save appearances, and with so little affectation, that, after having spent six weeks together in the greatest intimacy, I had not the least suspicion; and should perhaps never have known Mr. Wolmar's sentiments on religious matters, if Eloisa herself had not apprized me of them.

Several motives determined her to that confidence: In the first place, a too great reserve would have been incompatible with the friendship that subsists between us. Again, it would be only aggravating her uneasiness at her own cost, to deny herself the consolation of sharing it with a friend. She was, besides, unwilling that my presence should be long an obstacle to the conversation they frequently held together on a subject she had so much at heart. In short,
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knowing you intended soon to join us here, she was desirous, with the consent of her husband, that you should be previously made acquainted with his sentiments; as she hopes to find from your prudence and abilities, a supplement to our hitherto fruitless efforts, worthy of your character.

The opportunity she laid hold of to place this confidence in me, made me suspect also another reason, which, however, she herself never insinuated. Her husband had just left us; we lived formerly together; our hearts had been enamoured of each other; they still remembered their former transports; had they now forgot themselves but for a moment, we had been plunged into guilt and infamy. I saw plainly she was fearful of our private conversations, and sought to prevent the consequences she feared; and I was myself too well convinced, by the remembrance of what happened at Meillerie, that they who confide least in themselves are the safest to be trusted.

Under these groundless apprehensions, which her natural timidity inspired, she conceived she could take no better precaution than always to have a witness to our conversation, whose presence could not fail of being respected; and to call in, as a third person, the awful and upright judge, who searches the heart, and is privy to the most secret actions of men. Thus, committing herself to the immediate protection of the divinity, I found the deity always between us. What criminal desire could ever assail such a safeguard? my heart grew refined by her zeal, and I partook of her virtue.

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Thus, the gravest topicks of discourse took up almost all our private conferences in the absence of her husband; and since his return, we have resumed them frequently in his presence. He attends to our conversation, as if he was not at all concerned; and, without despising our endeavours, sometimes advises us in our method of argument. It is this which makes me despair of success; for had he less sincerity, one might attack that vicious faculty of the mind that nourishes his infidelity; but, if we are to convince him by dint of reasoning, where shall we find information that has escaped his knowledge, or arguments that have eluded his sagacity? For my part, when I have undertaken to dispute with him, I have found that all mine had been before exhausted to no purpose by Eloisa; and that my reasoning fell far short of that pathetic eloquence which, dictated by the heart, flowed in persuasive accents from her tongue. I fear, my Lord, we shall never make a convert of this man. He is too frigid, not immoral; his passions are not to be moved; sensibility, that innate proof of the truth of religion, is wanting; and the want of this alone is enough to invalidate all others.

Notwithstanding Eloisa's care to disguise her uneasiness from him, he knows and partakes of it; his discernment will not permit him to be imposed on. His own chagrin therefore, on account of hers, is but too apparent. Hence he has been tempted several times to affect a change of sentiments; and, for the sake of Eloisa's peace, to adopt tenets he could not in fact believe: but his soul was above the mean-

ness of hypocrisy. This dissimulation, instead of imposing on Eloisa, would only have afforded a new cause of sorrow. That sincerity, that frankness, that union of hearts, which now comfort them under their afflictions, would then have no more subsisted between them. Was it by making himself less worthy her esteem that he could hope to calm her fears? No, instead therefore of deceiving her, he tells her plainly his thoughts; but this he does in a manner so simple and unaffected, so little disdainful of received opinions, so unlike that ironical, contemptuous behaviour of pretended free-thinkers, that such melancholy confessions are extremely afflicting. As she cannot, however, inspire her husband with that faith and hope, with which she herself is animated, she studies with the more assiduity to indulge him in all those transient pleasures to which his happiness is confined. Alas! says she weeping, if the poor unfortunate has his heaven in this life, let us make it, at least, as agreeable to him as possible! †

That veil of sorrow, which this difference in opinion throws over their union, gives a farther proof of the irresistible ascendant of Eloisa, in the consolation with which that affliction is tempered, and which perhaps no other person

† How much more natural is this humane sentiment, than the horrid zeal of persecutors, always employed in tormenting the unbeliever, as if, to damn him in this life, they themselves were the fore-runners of devils? I shall ever continue to repeat it; a persecutor of others cannot be a true believer himself.

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in the world would be able to apply. All their altercations, all their disputes, on this important point, so far from giving rise to ill-nature, contempt, or anger, generally end in some affecting scene which the more endears them to each other.

Our conversation falling yesterday upon the same subject, as it frequently does when we three are by ourselves, we were led into a dispute concerning the origin of evil; in which I endeavoured to prove, that no absolute or general evil existed in the system of nature; but that even particular and relative evils were much less in reality, than in appearance; and that, on the whole, they were more than recompensed by our particular and relative good. As an example of this, I appealed to Mr. Wolmar himself, and, penetrated with a sense of the happiness of his situation, I described it so justly, and in such agreeable colours, that he seemed himself affected with the description. Such,' says he, interrupting me, 'are the delusive arguments of Eloisa: she always substitutes sentiment in the place of reason, and argues so affectingly, that I cannot help embracing her at every reply.' 'Was it not her philosophical preceptor,' added he, smiling, 'that taught her this manner of reasoning?' Two months before, this piece of pleasantry would have cruelly disconcerted me; but my first embarrassment was now over, and I joined in the laugh: nor did Eloisa, tho' she blushed a little, appear any more embarrassed than myself. We continued the dispute. Wolmar, not contending about the quantity of evil, contented himself with observing that, whether
little

little or much, evil still existed ; and thence inferred the want either of power, wisdom, or goodness, in the first cause. I, on my part, strove to deduce the origin of physical evil from the properties of matter, and of moral evil from the free-agency of man. I advanced, that nothing was impossible to the deity, except the creation of substances as perfect and exempt from evil as himself. We were in the heat of our dispute when I perceived Eloisa had left us.

‘ Can you guess whither she is gone ? ’ said her husband, seeing me look around for her.

‘ I suppose, said I, to give some orders in her family.’ ‘ No, replied he, she would not

‘ have left us at this time for that. Business of that kind is, I know not how, transacted

‘ without my ever seeing her interfere.’ ‘ Then she is gone to the nursery ? ’ ‘ No ; her chil-

‘ dren are not more at her heart than my conversation.’ ‘ Well then, said I, I know not

‘ what she is gone about ; but I am well assured she is employed in some useful concern.’

‘ Still less, said he coldly ; come, come along ; you shall see if I guess right.’

He then stepped softly along the room, and I followed him in the same manner : when, coming to the door of Eloisa’s closet, and finding it shut, he threw it suddenly open. Oh ! my Lord ! what a sight did this present us ! Eloisa on her knees, her hands lifted up to heaven, and her face bathed in tears ! she rose up precipitately, wiping her eyes, hiding her face, and trying to escape us : never did I see so affecting a confusion. Her husband did not give her time to get away ; but ran to her in a kind of transport ;

port; 'Ah, my dear! said he embracing her, even the fervency of your prayers betrays the weakness of your cause: what prevents their efficacy? if your desires were heard, they would presently be granted.' 'I doubt not, said she, with a devout confidence, but they will be granted; how soon or late, I leave to heaven. Could I obtain it, at the expence of my life, I should lay it down with pleasure, and think the last the best employed of all my days.'

Come, my Lord, leave those scenes of destruction you are now engaged in, and act a nobler part. Can a philosopher prefer the honour of destroying mankind, to the virtue of endeavouring to save them*?

LETTER CXLII.

To Lord B——.

WHAT! my Lord, after being absent a whole campaign, must you take a journey to Paris? Have you then entirely forgot Clarens, and its inhabitants? Are we less dear to you than my Lord H——! or, are you more necessary to that friend, than to those who expect you here? You oblige us to oppose our wishes to yours, and make me in particular

* There is here a long letter wanting, from Lord B—— to Eloisa. It is mentioned in the sequel; but, for particular reasons, I was obliged to suppress it.

lament,

lament, that I have not interest enough at the court of France, to prevent your obtaining the passports you wait for? But, no matter; go, visit your worthy countryman. In spite of you both, we will be revenged of you for the preference given him; for, whatever pleasure you may enjoy in his company, I know that, when you come to be with us, you will regret the time you staid away.

On receiving your letter, I at first suspected you were charged with some secret commission. If peace were in view, where could be found a more worthy mediator?—But when do kings put their confidence in men of worth? Dare they listen to truth? Do they know how to respect true merit? No, my dear Lord B——, you are not made for a minister of state; and I think too well of you to imagine, if you had not been born a peer, you would ever have risen to that dignity.—Come, come, my friend, you will be better at Clarens, than at court. What an agreeable winter shall we pass together, if the hope of seeing you here does not deceive me! Our happiness is every day preparing, by the arrival of one or other of those privileged minds, who are so dear to each other, so worthy of each other's esteem, and who seem only to wait for you to be able to live without all the rest of the world. On hearing what a lucky accident brought hither the baron's adversary, you foresaw the consequences of that rencounter; it has really fallen out as you foretold. That old litigant, tho' almost as obstinate and inflexible as his opponent, could not resist
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the ascendant we got over him. After seeing and conversing with Eloisa, he began to be ashamed of contending with her father ; and on leaving her, set out for Bern, in so favourable a disposition, that we hear an accommodation is far advanced, and from the Baron's last letter expect his return home in a few days. This you will already have been told by Mr. Wolmar : but probably you do not yet know that Mrs. Orbe, having settled her affairs, arrived here on Thursday last, and resides entirely at the house of her friend. As I knew beforehand the day of her arrival, I set out to meet her, unknown to Mrs. Wolmar, whom she had a mind to surprise : we met on this side Lutri, and returned together.

I think I never saw her so sprightly and agreeable ; but unequal, absent, giving little attention to any thing, and seldom replying ; talking by fits and starts ; in a word, given up entirely to that restlessness which is natural to us, when just on the point of obtaining what we have long ardently desired. One would have thought, every minute, that she was afraid of being obliged to return. Her journey, tho' so long deferred, was undertaken so precipitately, that it almost turned the heads of both mistress and domestics. A whimsical disorder appeared throughout the whole of her little baggage. If her woman imagined, as she did every now and then, that she had left something behind, Clara as constantly assured her she had put it into the seat of the coach ; where, upon farther enquiry, it was not to be found.

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As she was unwilling Eloisa should hear the rattling of her coach, she got out in the avenue before we came to the gate; and, skudding across the court-yard like a sylph, ran up-stairs with so much precipitation that she was obliged to stop and take breath on the first landing-place, before she could get up the next flight. Mr. Wolmar came out to meet her, but she was in too much hurry to speak to him. On opening the door of Eloisa's apartment, I saw her sitting near the window, with the little Harriot on her knee. Clara had prepared for her a fine compliment, in her way, a compound of affection and pleasantry; but, on setting her foot over the threshold, compliment and pleasantry were all forgotten; she flew forward to embrace her friend with a transport impossible to be described, crying out Ah! my dear, dear cousin! Harriot, seeing her mother, fled to meet her, and crying out *Mama, Mama*, ran with so much force against her, that the poor child fell backwards on the floor. The effect of the sudden appearance of Clara, the fall of Harriot, the joy, the apprehensions, that seized upon Eloisa at that instant, made her give a violent shriek, and faint away. Clara was going to lift up the child when she saw her friend turn pale, which made her hesitate whom to assist; till, seeing me take up Harriot, she flew to the relief of Eloisa; but, in endeavouring to recover her, sunk down likewise in a swoon by the side of her friend.

The child, seeing them both without motion, made such loud lamentations as soon brought the little Frenchwoman into the room; the

the one clung about her mother, the other ran to her mistress. For my part, I was so struck, that I stalked about the room without knowing what I did, venting broken exclamations, and making involuntary motions to no purpose. Wolmar himself, the unsusceptible Wolmar, seemed affected. But where is the heart of iron whom such a scene of sensibility would not affect? Where is the unfortunate mortal from whom such a scene of tenderness would not have extorted tears? Instead of running to Eloisa, this fortunate husband threw himself on a settee, to enjoy the delightful scene. ‘Be not afraid, says he, seeing our uneasiness. In these accidents nature only is exhausted for a moment, to recover itself with new vigour; they are never dangerous. Let me prevail on you not to interrupt the pleasure I take in this transporting sight, but partake it with me. How ravishingly delightful must it be to you? I never tasted any thing like it, and am yet the most unhappy of all here.’

You may judge, my Lord, by the first moment of their meeting, the consequences of the reunion of these charming friends. It has excited throughout the whole house a sound of gladness, a tumultuous joy, that has not yet subsided. Eloisa was in such an agitation as I never saw her in before; it was impossible for her to think of any thing all that day, but to gaze on her new visitor, and load her with fresh caresses. No body even thought of the saloon of Apollo; there was no occasion for thinking of it when every place gave equal pleasure. We were

were hardly, even the next day, composed enough to think of making an entertainment on the occasion. Had it not been for Wolmar, every thing would have gone wrong. In the mean time, every one was dressed in the best manner. No other care was admitted, than what tended to amusement. The entertainment was not grand, but extremely joyous; throughout the whole there reigned a pleasing confusion and disorder, which were its greatest embellishment.

The morning was spent in putting Mrs. Orbe in possession of her employment of intendant or housekeeper, and she betrayed the same eagerness to enter into her office, as a child does after a new play-thing; at which we were highly diverted. In entering the saloon at dinner, both cousins were agreeably surprised to see on every side, their names in cypher, artificially formed with flowers. Eloisa guessed in an instant to whom she was obliged for that piece of ingenuity, and embraced me in a transport of joy. Clara, contrary to former custom, hesitated to follow her example; till Wolmar reprimanding her, she blushed, and embraced me. Her sweet confusion, which I observed but too plainly, had an effect on me which I cannot describe; but I could not feel myself in her arms without emotion.

After dinner, a fine collation was set out in the gynceum, or women's apartment; where for once Mr. Wolmar and I were admitted, and were entertained agreeably. In the evening all the house, now increased by three persons, assembled to dance. Clara seemed ornamented
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by the hands of the Graces, never having appeared to so much advantage as on that day. She danced, she chatted, she laughed, she gave orders, she was capable of every thing. Having protested she would tire me out, she danced down five or six country-dances in a breath ; and then reproached me for footing it with the gravity of a philosopher. I, on the other hand, told her she danced like a fairy ; that she was full as mischievous, and that she would not let me rest night nor day. You shall see to the contrary, says she, here's that will set you to sleep presently : with that she started up, and led down another dance.

She was really indefatigable ; but it was otherwise with Eloisa : she could hardly support herself ; her knees trembled, as she danced ; she was too much affected, to be chearful. One might observe a tear of joy every now and then trickle from her eyes ; she regarded her cousin with a kind of delicious transport ; took a pleasure in conceiving herself the guest for whom the entertainment was made, and looked fondly upon Clara as the mistress of the house who entertained her.

After supper, I played off the fire-works I had brought from China, which had a pretty effect. We sat up great part of the night. At length it became time to break up : Mrs. Orbe was tired, or had danced enough to be so ; and Eloisa was desirous she should not sit up too late.

After this we became insensibly tranquil, and good order took place. Clara, giddy and inconsiderate as she seems, knows how to check her sallies, and put on an air of authority, when she

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she pleases. She has, besides great good sense, an exquisite discernment, the penetration of Wolmar, and the goodness of Eloisa; and tho' extremely liberal, has a good deal of discretion in her generosity: for, tho' left so young a widow, and charged with the care of a daughter, the fortunes of both increase in her hands; so that there is no reason to apprehend the house will, under her direction, be less prudently governed than before. In the mean time, Eloisa has the satisfaction of devoting herself entirely to an occupation more agreeable to her taste; that is the education of her children: and I doubt not but Harriot will profit greatly by one of her mothers having relieved the other. I say her mothers, because by the manner in which they both behave to her, it is difficult to distinguish which is really so; so that some strangers, who arrived here to-day, are still, or appear to be, in doubt about it. In fact, they both call her *Harriot*, or *my child*, indifferently. She calls the one her *Mama*, and the other her *little Mama*: she has the same love for both, and pays them equal obedience. If the ladies are asked whose child it is, each answers it is hers: if Harriot be questioned, she says that she has two mothers; so that it is no wonder people are puzzled. The most discerning, however, think her the child of Eloisa; Harriot, whose father was of a fair complexion, being fair like her, and something resembling her in features. A greater maternal tenderness appears also in the soft regards of Eloisa, than in the sprightlier looks of Clara. The child puts on also a more respectful air, and is

more reserved in her behaviour before the former. She places herself involuntarily oftner on the side of Eloisa, because she most frequently talks to her. It must be confessed all appearances are in favour of our *little mama*; and I perceive the deception is so agreeable to the two cousins, that it may be sometimes perhaps intended.

In a fortnight, my lord, nothing will be wanting here but your presence; and when you are arrived, I shall have a very bad opinion of that man, who shall be tempted to ransack the world for a virtue, or a pleasure, which may not be found in this house.

LETTER CXLIII.

To Lord B—.

FOR these three days past I have attempted every evening successively to write to you; but found myself, through the fatigue of the day, too sleepy to effect my purpose at night, and in the morning I am again called upon early to my employment. A pleasing tranquillity, more intoxicating than wine, takes possession of my senses, and I cannot without regret bear a moment's avocation from the new and agreeable amusements I find here.

I cannot indeed conceive that any place would be disagreeable to me in such company;

pany; but do you know why Clarens in itself is agreeable? It is, that here I find myself actually in the country, which I could hardly ever say before. The inhabitants of cities know not how to enjoy the country; they know not what it is to be there; and, even when they are there, know not what to do with themselves. They are ignorant of all rustic business and amusements; they despise them; they seem at home as if they were in a foreign country, and I am not at all surprized that they are displeased with it. Among the country people we should live as they do, or not associate with them at all.

The Parisians, who imagine they go into the country, mistake the thing; they carry Paris along with them. They are attended with their fingers, their wits, their authors, and their parasites. Cards, music, and plays, engross all their attention*; their tables are spread in the same manner as at Paris; they sit down to their meals at the same hours; are served with the same dishes, and in the same pomp: in a word, they do just the same things in the country as they did in town, where, for that reason, it had been better they had stayed; for, however opulent they are, or careful to omit

* Hunting indeed might be added. But this exercise is now made so commodious, that there is not half the fatigue or pleasure in it there used to be. But I shall not here treat of this subject, which would furnish too much matter to be inserted in a note: I may take occasion, perhaps, to speak of it elsewhere.

nothing they are accustomed to, they always find something wanting, and perceive the impossibility of carrying Paris altogether along with them. Thus, that variety they are so fond of, eludes their search; they are acquainted only with one manner of living, and are therefore a continual burden to themselves. To me every rural employment affords something agreeable; nor is there any so painful and laborious, as to excite our compassion for the labourer. As the object of both public and private utility, husbandry is peculiarly interesting; and, as it was the first employment of man in his state of innocence, it fills the mind with the most pleasing sensations, and affects us with the agreeable ideas of the golden age. The imagination cannot help being warmed by the prospects of seed-time and harvest: If we look around us, and see the fields covered with hay-makers, and with flocks of sheep, scattered at a distance, one is sensibly affected with a pleasure arising one knows not how. The voice of nature thus sometimes softens our savage hearts, and, tho' its dictates are too often fruitless, it is so agreeable that we never hear it without pleasure.

I must confess, that the misery which appears on the face of some countries, where the taxes devour the produce of the earth, the eager avarice of a greedy collector, the inflexible rigour of an inhuman master, take away much of the beauty of the prospect. To see the poor jaded cattle ready to expire under the whip; to see the unhappy peasants themselves emaciated with fasting, clothed in rags, groaning with fatigue, and hardly secured from the inclemencies
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of the weather by their wretched huts ; these are deplorable sights, and it makes one almost blush to be a man when one thinks how the very vitals of such poor objects are drained to satisfy their cruel masters. But what pleasure is it, on the other hand, to see the prudent and humane proprietors, in milder governments, make the cultivation of their lands the instrument of their benevolence, their recreation, their pleasures ! to see them with open hands distribute the bounties of providence ! to see their servants, their cattle, and every creature about them, fatten on the abundance that flows from their barns, their cellars, and granaries ! to see them surrounded with peace and plenty, and make, of the employment that enriches them, a continual entertainment ! How is it possible for one to be inattentive to the agreeable illusions which such objects present ? We forget the age we live in, and the vices of our contemporaries, and are transported in imagination to the time of the patriarchs ; we are desirous to set one's own hands to work ; to join in the rustic employment, and partake of the happiness annexed to it. Oh ! how delightful were the days of love and innocence, when the women were affectionate and modest, the men simple and content ! Such were the days when a lover did not regret fourteen years of servitude to obtain his mistress. Fair daughter of Laban ! keeper of thy father's flocks, how amiable must thou have been ! how irresistible thy charms ! No, never doth beauty exert its power so much as when in the midst of rural scenes and rustic simplicity. Here is the real seat of its empire ;

here she sits on her throne, surrounded by the graces ; adorned by whose hands, she captivates all beholders. Excuse this rhapsody, my lord ; I return now to my subject.

For this month past the autumnal heats have been preparing a favourable vintage, which the frost has already induced us to begin † ; the parched leaves falling off the vines, and exposing to view the clustered grapes, whose juicy ripeness invites the hands of the gatherers. Vines loaded with this salutary fruit, which heaven bestows on the unfortunate as a cure for all their woes ; the sound of the casks, tubs, and tons, which they are hooping on every side ; the songs of the gatherers with which the vintage re-echoes ; the continual trotting backwards and forwards of those who carry the grapes to the press ; the harsh sound of the rustic instruments that animate the people to work ; the agreeable and affecting picture of a general good humour, which seems to be extended at that time over the face of the whole earth ; add to these the fog, which the sun exhales in a morning, and draws up like the curtain of a theatre, to display so delightful a scene ; all conspire to give it the air of an entertainment ; and that an entertainment which is the more pleasing on reflection, that it is the only one in which mankind have art enough to join utility with delight.

† The vintage is very late in this country ; because the principal crop is of white wines ; to which the frost is of service.

Mr.

Mr. Wolmar, who has one of the best vineyards in the country, has made all the necessary preparations for his vintage. His backs, his wine-press, his cellar, his casks, are all ready for that delicious liquor for which they are designed. Mrs. Wolmar herself takes charge of the crop; the choice of the labourers, and the order and distribution of the several parts of the work falling to her share. Mrs. Orbe takes care of all entertainments, and of the payment of the day labourers, agreeable to the police established here, the laws of which are never infringed or broken. As to my part, I am set to inspect the press, and enforce the directions of Eloisa, who cannot bear the steam of the backs; and Clara did not fail to recommend me to this employ, as it is so well adapted, she says, to a toper. Thus every one having an allotted task, we are all up early in the morning, and are assembled to go to the vineyard. Mrs. Orbe, who never thinks herself sufficiently employed, undertakes further to observe and rate those who are idle; in doing which I can safely say, with respect to me at least, that she acquits herself with a malicious assiduity. As to the old baron, while we are all employed, he walks out with his gun, and comes every now and then, to take me from my work, to go with him a thrush-shooting; and I am taxed by my companions with being secretly engaged to him. So that by degrees I lose my old name of philosopher and get that of an idler; appellations which in reality are not very different. You see, by what I have told you of the baron, that we are quite reconciled, and that Wolmar

has reason to be content with his second experiment †. Shall I hate the father of my friend! No, were I his son, I could not respect him more than I do. In fact, I know not any man more sincere, more open, more generous, or more honourable in every respect than this old gentleman. But the extravagance of his notions and prejudices is odd enough. Since he is certain I cannot be united to his family, he is extremely civil; and, provided I be not his son-in-law, he will readily give up every thing, and allow me a superiority to himself. The only thing I cannot forgive him, is, that when we are alone, he will sometimes rally the pretended philosopher on his former lectures. His pleasantry on this head hurts me, and I am always vexed at it; but he turns my resentment into ridicule, and says,

† This will be better understood by the following extract of a letter from Eloisa, not inserted in this collection. “ This, says Mr. Wolmar, taking me aside, is the second proof I intended to put him to, if he had not paid great respect to your father, I should have mistrusted him. But, said I, how shall we reconcile that respect to the antipathy that subsists between them? It subsists no longer, replied he. Your father’s prejudices have done St. Preux all the harm they could; he has no farther reason to fear them; he is not angry at your father, but pities him. The baron, on his side, is no longer jealous of St. Preux; he has a good heart; is sensible he has injured him, and is sorry for it. I see they will do very well together, and will for the future see each other with pleasure. From this moment, therefore, I shall put an entire confidence in him.”

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Come along, let us go bring down a thrush or two ; we have carried this argument far enough. And then he calls out, as we go out of doors ; Here, Clara, Clara ! provide a good supper for your master ; I am going to get him an appetite. Notwithstanding his age, also, I can assure you, he brushes among the vines with his gun, with as much activity as myself, and is incomparably a better marksman. I have some satisfaction, however, in that he dares not drop a word before his daughter, the little scholar prescribing no less to her father, than to her preceptor. But to return to our vintage.

It is now a week since we have been employed in this agreeable occupation, yet we have hardly done half our work. Besides the wines intended for sale and for common use, which are only simply tho' carefully made, our benevolent fairy makes others of a more exquisite flavour for us drinkers ; I myself assisting in the magical operations.

We make wines of all countries from the grapes of one vineyard : to make one sort, she orders the stalks of the bunches to be twisted when the grape is ripe, and lets them dry by the heat of the sun upon the stock ; for another, she has the grapes picked and stoned before they are put into the press ; again, for a third sort, she has the red grapes gathered before sun-rising, and carefully conveyed to the press, fresh with their bloom, and covered with the morning dew, to make white wine. She makes a sweet wine, by putting into the casks *must*, reduced to a syrup by evaporation ; a dry wine by checking its fermentation ; a bitter cordial by steeping

wormwood || ; and a muscadel wine, with the help of simples. All those different wines have their peculiar methods of preparation ; every one of which is simple and wholesome. And thus an industrious œconomy makes up for a diversity of soils, and unites twenty climates in one. You cannot conceive with what assiduity, with what alacrity, all our business is done. We sing and laugh all day long, without the least interruption to our work. We live all together in the greatest familiarity ; are all treated on a footing, and yet no one forgets himself. The ladies put on none of their fine airs, the country women are modest, the men droll, but never rude. Those are the most careless who sing the best songs, tell the best stories, or hit off the best joke. Our good understanding even gives rise to pleasant bickerings between us, and our mutual raillery is exerted only to shew, how far we can bear with good temper, each other's severity. There is no returning home to play the *gentle folks* ; we stay all the day long in the vineyard ; Eloisa having caused a lodge to be built there, whither we retreat to warm ourselves when cold, or to shelter us when it rains. We dine with the peasants, and at their hour, as well as work with them. We eat their soup, a little coarse indeed, but very good, and seasoned with excellent herbs. We laugh not

|| In Switzerland they drink a great deal of bitter wine ; and in general, as the herbs of the Alps have more virtue than the plants of other countries, they make great use of infusions.

at their downright behaviour and rustic compliments ; but, in order to free them from constraint, give into their own ways without affectation. This complaisance on our side, also, is not lost upon them ; they are sensible of it ; and, seeing that we are so ready to go out of our way for them, they are more willing to go on in their own for us. At dinner the children are brought from the house, and pass the rest of the day in the vineyard. How rejoiced are the peasants to see them ! then, taking them up in their sturdy arms, they bless them, and wish heaven may prolong their days to resemble their parents, and make them in like manner a blessing to their country. When I think that the most of these men have borne arms, and understand the use of the sword and musket, as well as the management of the hoe and pruning-knife, in seeing Eloisa so loved and respected by them, and herself and children received with such affecting acclamations, I cannot help calling to mind the virtuous and illustrious Agrippina, shewing her son to the troops of Germanicus. Incomparable Eloisa ! who exercises in the simplicity of private life, the despotic power of wisdom and beneficence ; your person a dear and sacred trust deposited in the hands of your countrymen, every one of whom would defend and protect you at the hazard of his own life ; it is yours to live more securely, more honourably, in the midst of a whole people who love you, than monarchs surrounded with guards.

In the evening, we all return home chearfully together ; the work-people being lodged and boarded with us all the time of the vintage ;

and even on sundays after the evening service, we assemble and dance together till supper-time. On the other days of the week, also, we remain all together, after we are returned home, except the baron, who, eating no suppers, goes to bed early, and Eloisa, who with her children stays with him till his bed-time. Thus, from the time we take upon ourselves the business of the vintage till we quit it, we never once mix the city and country life together. These Saturnalia are much more agreeable and discreet than those of the Romans. The contrast they affected was too preposterous to improve either the master or the slave; but the peaceful equality which prevails here, re-establishes the order of nature, is productive of instruction to some, of consolation to others, and of a friendly connection between all §. Our assembly-room is an old hall with a great chimney and a good fire in it. On the mantle-piece are lighted

§ If hence arises a kind of equality not less agreeable to those who descend, than to those who are elevated, does it not follow, that all conditions of life are in themselves almost indifferent, since people are not always confined to them? Beggars are unhappy, because they are always beggars; kings are miserable because they always kings. People in a middling condition are the happiest, because they can easier vary their circumstances, to enjoy the pleasures of those above or those below them. They are also more intelligent, because they have an opportunity of knowing more of the prejudices of mankind, and of comparing them with each other. This seems to me the principal reason why, generally speaking, people of a middling station in life are the most happy, and are persons of the best sense.

up three lamps, made by Mr. Wolmar's orders, of tin, just to catch the smoak and reflect the light. To prevent giving rise to envy, every thing is carefully avoided that might in the eyes of these poor people appear more costly than what they meet with at home ; no other mark of opulence being displayed than the choice of the best of common things, and a little more profusion in their distribution. Supper is served upon two long tables ; where the pomp and luxury of entertainments is amply supplied by good humour and plenty. Every one sits down to table, master, labourers, and servants ; every one without distinction gets up to help himself, without exception or preference ; the whole repast ending in gratitude and festivity. All drink at their discretion, subject to no other rules than those of decency and sobriety. The presence of superiors, whom they so truly respect, keeps the work-people within bounds ; yet lays no restraint on their ease and chearfulness. And should any one happen to forget himself and give offence, the company is not disturbed by reprimands, the offender being dismissed the next day, without farther notice.

Thus, do I take advantage of the pleasures of the country and the season. I resume the freedom of living after the manner of the country, and to drink pure wine pretty often ; but I drink none that is not poured out by the hands of one or other of the two cousins ; who take upon them to measure my thirst by the strength of my head, and to manage my reason as they think proper ; nor does any one know better how to manage it, or has like them the art to give or
take

take it away from me at pleasure. When the fatigue of the day, or the length and festivity of the repast, add to the strength of the liquor, I indulge myself without restraint in the follies it inspires. They are no longer such as I need suppress, even in the presence of the sagacious Wolmar. I am no longer afraid his penetrating eye should see into the bottom of my heart ; and, when a tender idea arises in my memory, one look from Clara dissipates it ; one look of Eloisa makes me blush for my weakness.

After supper, we sit up an hour or two to strip hemp ; every one singing a song in turn. Sometimes the women sing all together, or one sings alone, and the rest join in chorus to the burden of the song. Most of their songs are old tales, set to no very agreeable tunes. There is, notwithstanding, something antique and affecting, which on the whole is very pleasing. The words are generally very simple, unaffected, and often very sorrowful : they are, nevertheless, entertaining. Clara cannot forbear smiling, Eloisa blushing, and myself from giving a sigh, when the same turns and expressions are repeated in these songs, which have heretofore been made use of between us. On those occasions, the remembrance of times past rushes upon my mind : I am seized with a trembling, an insupportable burthen oppresses my heart, and leaves so deep an impression of sorrow that I can hardly shake it off. I find, nevertheless, in these evenings a sort of pleasure which I cannot describe, and which is nevertheless very great.

The union of people of different conditions, the simplicity of their occupation, the idea of

ease,

ease, concord, and tranquillity, the peaceful sensation it awakes in the soul; these altogether have something affecting that disposes every one to make choice of the most interesting songs. The concert of female voices is also not without its charms. For my part, I am convinced, that of all kinds of harmony there is none so agreeable as singing in unison; and that we only require a variety of concords, because our taste is depraved. Does not harmony in fact exist in every single note? what then can we add to it, without changing the proportions which nature has established in the relation of harmonious sounds.

Nature has done every thing in the best manner; but we would do better, and so spoil all.

There is as great an emulation among us about the work of the evening, as about that of the day; and a piece of roguery I was guilty of yesterday, brought me into a little disgrace. As I am not the most expert at hemp-peeling, and am sometimes absent in thought, I begun to be tired with always being pointed at for doing the least work. I shovelled the stalks with my feet therefore from my next neighbours, to enlarge my own heap; but that inexorable Mrs. Orbe, perceiving it, made a sign to Eloisa, who, detecting me in the fact, reprimanded me severely. Come, come, says she aloud, I'll have no injustice done here, though in jest; it is thus people accustom themselves to cheating, and prove rogues in good earnest, and then, what is worse, make a jest of it.

In this manner we pass our evenings. When it is near bed-time, Mrs. Wolmar stands up,
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and says, Come, now let us to our fire-works. On which, every one takes up his bundle of hemp-stalks, the honourable proofs of his labour, which are carried in triumph into the middle of the court-yard, and there laid as trophies in a heap, and set on fire. Every one, however, has not indiscriminately this honour; but those to whom Eloisa adjudges it, by giving the torch to him or her, who has done most work that evening; and when this happens to be herself, she does it with her own hands, without more to do. This ceremony is accompanied with acclamations and clapping of hands. The stalks soon burn up in a blaze, which ascends to the clouds; a real bonfire, about which we laugh and sing, till it is out. After this, the whole company are served with liquor, and every one drinks to the health of the conqueror, and goes to bed, content with a day passed in labour, chearfulness and innocence, which he would willingly begin again the next day, the next after that, and every day, to the last of his life.

L E T T E R CXLIV.

To Mr. WOLMAR.

ENJOY, my dear Wolmar, the fruits of your labour. Receive the acknowledgements of a heart, which you have taken so much pains to render worthy of being offered to your acceptance. Never did any man undertake so arduous a task; never did any one attempt what
you

you have executed; nor did ever a susceptible and grateful mind, feel more than that with which you have inspired me. Mine had lost its force, its vigour, its very being; but you have restored them all; I was dead to virtue, to happiness, and owe to you that moral life, to which you have raised me. O my benefactor! my father! in giving myself up entirely to you, I can only offer, as to the Deity, the gifts I have received at your hands.

Must I confess to you my weakness and my fears? Hitherto I have always distrusted myself. It is not a week ago that I blushed for the weakness of my heart, and thought all our pains had been lost. That cruel and discouraging moment, however, thanks to heaven and you, is past, never to return. I do not think myself cured, only because you tell me so, but because I feel it: I stand no longer in need of your answering for me, who have put me in a state to answer for myself. It was necessary for me to be absent from you and Eloisa, to know what I should be without your support. It is at a distance from her abode, that I learn not to be afraid to approach her.

As I write the particulars of our journey to Mrs. Orbe, I shall not repeat them here; I am not unwilling you should know my foibles; but I have not the courage to tell you of them. It is, my dear Wolmar, my last fault. I feel myself so far already from being liable to commit the like again, that I cannot think of it without disdain; and yet it is so little a while since, that I cannot acknowledge it without shame. You who can so readily forgive my errors, will doubtless

less forgive the shame which attends my repentance.

Nothing is now wanting to compleat my happiness. My Lord B—— has told me all. Shall I then, my dear friend, be devoted entirely to you? shall I educate your children? shall the eldest of the three be preceptor to the rest? with what ardour have I not desired it? The hope of being thought worthy of such employment, has redoubled my assiduity to second your paternal care and instructions.

How often have I not expressed my earnestness, in this particular, to Eloisa! with what pleasure have I not interpreted the discourse of both of you in my favour! But although she was convinced of my zeal for your service, and seemed to approve of its object, she never entered so explicitly into my designs as to encourage me to speak more openly. I was sensible I ought rather to merit that honour than ask for it. I expected of you and her that proof of your confidence and esteem. I have not been deceived in my expectation, nor shall you, my dear friends, believe me, be deceived in yours.

You know that, in the course of our conversation on the education of your children, I have thrown together upon paper some of those sentiments which such conversation furnished me with, and which you approved. Since my departure, some new reflections have suggested themselves on the same subject: I have reduced the whole into a kind of system, which, when I have properly digested, I shall communicate to you for your examination. I do not think, however, I shall be able to make it fit for your
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inspection till after our arrival at Rome. My system is a supplement to that of Eloisa; or rather, it is nothing more than a connection and illustration of hers; for it consists only in rules to prevent the natural disposition from being spoiled, in subjecting it to the laws and customs of society.

I have recovered my reason by your care: my heart is again sound and at liberty: I see myself beloved by all whose love I could wish to possess: futurity presents me with an agreeable prospect. With all this my situation should surely be delightful; but it is decreed, my soul shall never enjoy tranquillity. As the end of our journey approaches, I see the crisis of the fate of my illustrious friend: it is I, if I may so say, who ought to decide it. Cannot I at least do that once for him which he has so often done for me? cannot I nobly discharge the greatest and most important duty of my life? My dear Wolmar, I retain all your lessons in my heart; but, to make them useful, why don't I possess your sagacity? Ah could I but one day see Lord B—— happy! could I, agreeable to your projects, see us but all assembled together never to part again! could I entertain a wish for any thing on earth besides! Yes, one, the accomplishment of which depends not on you, nor me, nor on any other person in the world; but on him who has a reward in store for the virtues of Eloisa, and keeps a secret register of your good actions.

L E T.

L E T T E R CXLV.

To Mrs. ORBE.

WHERE are you, my charming cousin? O where is the amiable confident of that feeble heart, which is, on so many accounts, yours; and which you have so often comforted in despair? come, and let me lay open to you the confession of its last error. Is it not always your province to purify it by confession and pardon? is there a fault which it can reproach itself with after it hath confessed it to you? No, it is no longer the same; and its regeneration is owing to you: you have given me a new heart, which now offers you its first services: but I shall not think myself quite free from that which I quit, 'till I have deposited it in your hands.

The moment of my life in which I had most reason to be contented with myself was that in which I left you. Recovered of my errors, I looked upon that instant as the tardy æra of my return to my duty. I begun it therefore, by paying off part of that immense debt I owed to friendship, in leaving so delightful an abode to follow a benefactor, a philosopher, who pretending to stand in need of my services, put the success of his to the proof. The more disagreeable my departure, the more I piqued myself on making so great a sacrifice. After having spent half my
time

time in nourishing an unhappy passion, I consecrated the other half to justify it, and to render, by my virtues, a more worthy homage to her, who so long received that of my heart. I proudly contemplated the first of my days in which I had neither given occasion for my own blushes, for yours, for hers, nor for those of any one who was dear to me. My Lord B——, being apprehensive of a sorrowful parting, was for our setting out early, without taking a formal leave ; but though hardly any body was stirring in the house, we could not elude your friendly vigilance. Your door half open, and your woman on the watch ; your coming out to meet us, and our going in and finding a table set out and tea made ready, all these circumstances brought to my mind those of former times ; and, comparing my present departure with that which came to my remembrance, I found myself so very differently disposed to what I was on the former occasion, that I rejoiced to think Lord B—— was a witness of that difference, and hoped to make him forget at Milan, the shameful scene of Besançon. I never found myself so resolute before ; I prided myself in displaying my temper before you ; behaving with more fortitude than you had ever seen in me ; and gloried, in parting, to think I had appeared before you such as I was going ever afterwards to be. This idea added to my courage ; I supported my spirits by your esteem ; and perhaps should have left you without weeping, if a tear, trickling down your cheek, had not drawn a sympathetic drop from my eyes.

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I left you with a heart fully sensible of its obligations, and particularly penetrated with such as your friendship has laid me under; resolved to employ the rest of my life in deserving them. My Lord B——, taking me to task for my past follies, laid before me no very agreeable picture; and I knew by the just severity with which he censured my foibles, that he was little afraid of imitating them. He pretended, nevertheless, to be apprehensive of it; and spoke to me with some uneasiness of his journey to Rome, and the unworthy attachments which, in spite of himself, led him thither: but I saw plainly that he exaggerated his own dangers, to engage my attention the more to him, and draw it off from those to which I was myself exposed. Just as we got into Villeneuve, one of our servants, who was but badly mounted, was thrown off his horse, and got a small contusion on his head: on which his master had him bled, and determined to stay there that night. We accordingly dined early, and afterwards took horses and went to Bex, to see the salt manufactory; where, at my lord's desire, who had some particular reason for requesting it, I took a sketch of the building and works, so that we did not return to Villeneuve till night. After supper we chatted a good while over our punch, and went to bed pretty late. It was in this conversation he informed me of the charge intended to be committed to my care, and what measures had been taken to bring it about. You may judge of the effect this piece of information had upon me; a conversation of this nature did not incline me

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to sleep. It was at length, however, time to retire.

As I entered the chamber appointed for me, I immediately recollected it to be the same in which I had formerly slept, on my journey to Sion. The view of it made an impression on me, which would be very difficult for me to describe. I was struck with such lively ideas of what I then was, that I imagined myself again in the same situation, though ten years of my life had passed away in the interval, and all my troubles had been forgotten. But alas! that reflection was but of a short duration, and the next moment oppressed me with the weight of my former afflictions. How mortifying were the recollections that succeeded to my first reverie! what dreadful comparisons suggested themselves to my mind! Ye pleasures of early youth; ye exquisite delights of a first passion, O why, said I, doth your remembrance wound a heart already too much oppressed with griefs? thrice happy were those days! days now no more, in which I loved and was beloved again; in which I gave myself up in peaceful innocence, to the transports of a mutual passion; in which I drank its intoxicating draughts, and all my faculties were lost in the rapture, the extasy, the delirium of love. On the rocks of Meillerie, in the midst of frost and snow, with the frightful precipices before my eyes, was there a being in the creation so happy as I? and yet I then wept! I then thought myself unfortunate! sorrow even then ventured to approach my heart! what therefore should I be now, when I have possessed all that my soul held dear, and lost it for ever? I
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deserve my misfortune, for having been so little sensible of my happiness!—did I weep then?—didst thou weep? unfortunate wretch! thou shalt weep no more—thou hast no right to weep.—Why is she not dead? said I, in a transport of rage; yes, I should then be less unhappy: I could then indulge myself in my griefs; I should embrace her cold tomb with pleasure: my affliction should be worthy of her: I might then say, She hears my cries, she sees my tears, she is moved by my groans, she approves and accepts of my homage.—I should then at least, have cherished the hope of being united to her again.—But she lives, and is happy in the possession of another.—She lives, and her life is my death; her happiness is my torment; and heaven, having taken her from me, deprives me even of the mournful pleasure of regretting her loss—she lives, but not for me: she lives for my despair, who am an hundred times farther from her than if she were no more.

I went to bed under these tormenting reflections; they accompanied me in my sleep and disturbed it with terrible apprehensions. The most poignant afflictions, sorrow, and death composed my dreams, and all the evils I ever felt represented themselves to my imagination in a thousand new forms, to torment me over again. One vision in particular, and that the most cruel of all, still pursued me; and though the confused apparitions of various phantoms several times appeared and vanished, they all ended in the following.

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Methought I saw the departed mother of your friend on her death-bed, and her daughter on her knees before her, bathed in tears, kissing her hands and receiving her last breath. This scene, which you once described to me, and which will never be effaced from my memory, was represented in striking colours before me. O my dear mother, said Eloisa, in accents that chilled my very soul, she who is indebted to you for her life, deprives you of yours! Alas! take back what you gave me; for without you it will be only a life of sorrow. My child, answered her languishing mother, God is just, and his will must be obeyed—you will be a mother in your turn, and—she could say no more.—On this methought I went forward, to look upon her; but she was vanished, and Eloisa lay in her place; I saw her plainly, and perfectly knew her, though her face was covered with a veil. I gave a shriek, and ran to take off the veil; but, methought after many attempts to lay hold of it I could not reach it, but tormented myself with vain endeavours to grasp what, though it covered her face, appeared to be impalpable. Upon which, methought she addressed me in a faint voice, and said, Friend, be composed, the awful veil that is spread over me, is too sacred to be removed. At these words I struggled, made a new effort, and awoke; when I found myself in my bed, harrassed with fright and fatigue, my face covered with big drops of sweat, and drowned in tears.

My fears being a little dissipated, I went to sleep again; again the same dream put me into the same agitations: I awoke again, and went to sleep the third time, when the same mournful scene still presented itself, the same appearance

of death, and always the same impenetrable veil, eluding my grasp, and hiding from me the dying object which it covered.

On waking from this last dream, my terror was so great, that I could not overcome it, though quite awake. I threw myself out of bed, without well knowing what I did, and wandered up and down my chamber, like a child in the dark, imagining myself beset with phantoms, and still fancying in my ears, the sound of that voice, whose plaintive notes I never heard without emotion. The dawn of day, beginning to cast some light upon the objects in my chamber, served only to transform them, agreeable to my troubled imagination. My fright increased, and at length entirely deprived me of reason. Having with some difficulty found the door, I ran out of my room, bolted into that of Lord B——, and, drawing open his curtains, threw myself down upon his bed, almost breathless, crying out, she is gone—she is gone—I shall never see her more.—His lordship started out of his sleep, and flew to his sword, imagining himself attacked by robbers. But he presently perceived who it was; and I soon after recollected myself; this being the second time of my life that I had appeared before him in such confusion.

He made me sit down and compose myself; and as soon as he had learnt the cause of my fright, endeavoured to turn it into ridicule; but, seeing me too deeply affected with it, and that the impression it had made was not to be easily effaced, he changed his tone. For shame, says he with an air of severity, you neither deserve my friend-

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ship nor esteem: had I taken a quarter of the pains with one of my footmen which I have done with you, I had made a man of him: but you are fit for nothing. It is indeed, my lord, answered I, too true. I had nothing good in me but what came from her, whom now I shall see no more; and am therefore good for nothing. At this he smiled, and embraced me. Come, come, says he, endeavour to compose yourself; to-morrow you will be a reasonable creature. He then changed the conversation and proposed to set out. The horses were accordingly ordered to be put to. In getting into the chaise, my Lord whispered something to the postilion, who immediately drove off.

We travelled for some time without speaking. I was so taken up with my last night's dream, that I heard and saw nothing; not even observing that the lake, which, the day before, was on my right hand, was now on my left. The rattling of the chaise upon the pavement, however, at length awoke me out of my lethargy; I looked up, and to my great surprize, found we were returned to Clarens. About a furlong from the gate, my Lord ordered us to be set down; and taking me aside, You see my design, said he; it has no need of further explanation: go thou visionary mortal, continued he, pressing my hand between his, go and see her again. Happy in exposing your follies only to your friends, make haste, and I will wait for you here; but be sure you do not return, till you have removed that fatal veil which is woven in your brain.

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What could I say? I left him without making any answer, and, trembling as I advanced, slowly approached the house. What a part, said I to myself, am I going to act here? how dare I shew myself? what pretext have I for this unexpected return? with what face can I plead my ridiculous terrors, and support the contemptuous looks of the generous Wolmar? In short, the nearer I drew to the house, the more childish my fears seemed to me, and the more contemptible my extravagant behaviour: my mind, however, still misgave me, and I went on, tho' every step more slowly, till I came just to the court-yard; when I heard the door of the Elysium just open and shut again. Seeing no body come out, I made a tour round the aviary, keeping as close to it as possible; I then listened, and could hear you conversing together; but, tho' I could not distinguish a word you said, I thought I perceived something in the sound of your voice so languishing and tender, that I could not hear it without emotion; and in Eloisa's a sweet and affectionate accent, not only such as is usual to her, but so mild and peaceful as to convince me all as well.

This restored me to my senses at once, and woke me in good earnest from my dream. I perceived myself immediately so altered that I laughed at my ridiculous fears; and while I reflected that only a hedge and a few shrubs prevented me from seeing her alive and in good health, whom I imagined I should never see again, I renounced for ever my fearful and chimerical apprehensions; and determined with-

out

out more ado, to return without even seeing her. You may believe me, Clara, when I protest to you that I not only did not see her, but went back, proud of not having been so weak as to push my credulity to the end, and of having at least done so much credit to myself, as not to have it said of a friend of Lord B——'s, that he could not get the better of a dream.

This, my dear cousin, is what I had to tell you, and is the last confession I have to make. The other particulars of our journey are not at all interesting; let it suffice, therefore, to assure you, that not only his lordship has been very well satisfied with me since, but that I am still more so with myself, who am more sensible of my cure than he can be. For fear of giving him any needless distrust, I concealed from him my not having actually seen you. When he asked me if the veil was drawn aside, I answered without hesitation in the affirmative; and we have not mentioned it since. Yes, cousin, the veil is drawn aside for ever; that veil which has so long hoodwinked my reason. All my unruly passions are extinguished. I see and respect my duty. You are both dearer to me than ever, but my heart knows no difference between you; nor feels the least inclination to separate the inseparables.

We arrived the day before yesterday at Milan, and the day after to-morrow we shall leave it. In about a week we hope to be at Rome, and expect to find letters from you on our arrival. How tedious will seem the time before I shall see those two surprising persons who have so long troubled the repose of the greatest minds!

O Eloisa! O Clara! no woman that is not equal to you, is worthy of such a man!

LETTER CXLVI.

From Mrs. ORBE.

WE all waited impatiently to hear from you, so that you will easily guess how much pleasure your letters gave our little community; but what you will hardly imagine is, that they should give me less than any other person in the house. They all were pleased that you had happily passed the Alps; for my part, I had no pleasure in reflecting that the Alps were between us.

With respect to the particulars of your return, we have said nothing of them to the baron; besides, I skipped over some of your soliloquies, in reading your letter in company. Mr. Wolmar is so ingenuous, as only to laugh at you; but Eloisa could not recollect the last moments of her dying mother, without shedding fresh tears. Your letter had no other effect upon her than reviving her affliction.

As to myself, I will confess to you, my dear preceptor, that I am no longer surpris'd to see you in continual astonishment at yourself; always committing some new folly, and always repenting of it: you have long pass'd your life in self-reproach over-night, and in applauding yourself in the morning.

I will freely acknowledge to you, also, that the great effort of your courage, in turning back when so near us, just as wise as you came, does not appear to me so extraordinary as it may to you. There seems to me more vanity in it, than prudence; and, I believe, upon the whole, I should have liked a little less fortitude with more discretion. From such a manner of running away, may not one ask, to what purpose you came? you were ashamed to shew yourself, and it is of your being afraid to shew yourself that you ought in fact to be ashamed. As if the pleasure of seeing your friends were not an ample recompence for the petty chagrin their raillery might give you. Ought you not to have thought yourself happy in the opportunity of diverting us with your bewilder'd looks? As I could not laugh at you then, however, I will laugh at you now; tho' I lose half the pleasure in not seeing your confusion.

Unhappily there is something worse than all this; which is, that I have caught your fears, without having your means of dispelling them. That dream of yours has something in it so horrible, that I am at once terrified and afflicted with it, in spite of all I can do. In reading your letter I am apt to blame your agitation; after I have read it I blame your security. It is impossible to see a sufficient reason for your being so much affected, and at the same time for your becoming tranquil. It is very strange, that your fearful apprehensions should prevail till the very moment in which you might have been satisfied, and that you should stop there.

Another step, a motion, a word had done the business. You were alarmed without reason, and composed again without cause: but you have infected me with a terror which you no longer feel; and it appears, that if you have given an instance once in your life of your fortitude, it has been at my expence. Since the receipt of your fatal letter, my heart is constantly oppressed. I cannot approach Eloisa, without trembling at the thoughts of losing her. I think every now and then I see a deadly paleness overspread her countenance; and this morning, as I embraced her, tears burst involuntarily from me, and poured down my cheeks. O, that veil! that veil!—There is something so prophetic in it, that it troubles me every time I think of it. No, I cannot forgive you for not removing it, when you had it in your power, and fear I shall never have a moment's peace of mind till I see you again in company with her. You must own, that, after having talked so long of philosophy, you have here given a very unreasonable proof of yours. Dream again, and come and see your friends; it were better for you to do this and be a *visionary mortal*, than to run away from them and be a philosopher.

It appears by a letter of Lord B——'s to Mr. Wolmar, that he thinks seriously of coming to settle with us. As soon as he is determined, and his heart has made its choice, may you both return stedfast and happy! This is the constant prayer of our little community, and above all that of your friend,

CLARA ORBE.

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P. S. If you really heard nothing of our conversation in the Elysium, it is perhaps so much the better for you ; for you know me to be vigilant enough to see some people without their seeing me, and severe enough to verify the proverb, that *listeners seldom hear any good of themselves.*

L E T T E R CXLVII.

From Mr. WOLMAR.

AS I write to Lord B——, and explain myself so fully with respect to you, I have hardly any thing more to say at present than to refer you to his letter. Yours would perhaps require of me a return of civilities ; but these I had rather make in actions than in words. To make you one of my family, to treat you as my brother, my friend ; to make her you loved your sister ; to put into your hands a paternal authority over my children ; to invest you with my privileges, after having robbed you of yours ; these are the compliments I have to make you. If, on your part, you justify my conduct, it will be sufficient praise. I have endeavoured to honour you with my esteem ; it is yours to honour me by your merit. Let no other encomiums pass between us.

So far am I from being surprized at seeing you affected with a dream, that I see no very good reason for your reproaching yourself for being so. One dream more or less seems to be of no

importance in such systematical gentlemen as yourself, whose very principles are so visionary.

What I reproach you for, is less the effect of your dream, than the species of it ; and that for a reason very different, perhaps, from what you may imagine. A certain tyrant once condemned a man to death for dreaming that he had stabbed him. Recollect the reason he gave for that sentence, and make the application. What ! you are going to determine the fate of your friend, and you are thinking of your old amours ! Had it not been for the conversation of the preceding evening, I should never forgive you that dream. Think in the day-time of what you are going to do at Rome, and you will dream less at night of what is doing at Vevay.

The little French-woman is sick, which keeps Mrs. Wolmar so constantly employed that she has not time to write to you. Somebody, however, will willingly take upon themselves that agreeable task. Happy youth ! to whose happiness every thing conspires ! the rewards of virtue all await your merit. As to that of my good will, trouble no one with it ; it is from you only I expect it.

L E T.

L E T T E R CXLVIII.

To Mr. W O L M A R.

LET this letter be kept to ourselves. Let the errors of the best of men be for ever buried in profound secrecy. In what a dangerous task have I engaged! O my sensible and generous friend! why do I not retain your counsel in my memory, as I do your benevolence at my heart! never did I before stand in more need of your prudence, nor did ever the apprehensions of falling short of it so much embarrass the little I have. Ah! what is become of your paternal advice, your instruction, your knowledge? what will become of me without you? Yes, I would give up every flattering prospect in life to have you here in this critical moment, though but for one week.

I have been deceived in all my conjectures: I have as yet done nothing but blunder. I was afraid only of the marchioness. After having seen her and been struck with admiration at her beauty and address, I applied myself, with all my might, to wean the affections of her noble lover from so attracting an object. Charmed with the thoughts of bringing him over to the side where I thought there was no danger, I launched out in the praise of Laura, and spoke of her with the esteem and admiration with which she had inspired me: in weakening his stronger attachment for her rival, I hoped, by degrees, entirely to destroy both. My Lord readily gave into my design; and, exceeding

even the bounds of complaisance, perhaps to punish my importunities, by alarming me on the other side, affected a much greater warmth of passion for Laura than he really felt. But what shall I say to him now? the ardour of his passion remains without any affectation. His heart, exhausted by so many trials, was left in a state of weakness, of which she has taken the advantage. It would be difficult indeed for any man long to affect a passion for her which he did not feel. In fact, it is impossible to look upon this lovely unfortunate, without being struck by her air and figure; a certain cast of languor and depression, which constantly shades her charming features, in damping the vivacity of her looks, renders them but the more affecting; even as the sun darts its rays through the passing clouds, so her eyes cast the more piercing looks through the clouds of grief that obscure their lustre. Her very dejection has all the grace of modesty; in seeing, one pities her; in hearing, one respects her. In short, I can avow, in justification of my friend, that I know only two men in the world, who could see and converse with her without danger.

Oh Wolmar! he is lost to reason. I see, and feel it; I own it to you with bitterness of heart. I tremble to think how far his extravagant passion may make him forget himself and his duty. I tremble lest that intrepid love of virtue, which makes him despise the opinion of the world, should hurry him into the other extreme, and lead him to trespass even the sacred laws of decorum and decency. Shall my Lord

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B— contract such a marriage?—can you think it—under the eye of his friend too! who sees, who suffers it!—and who lies under infinite obligations to him! no, he shall rip open my breast, and tear out my heart with his own hand, ere he shall thus abuse it.

But what shall I do! how shall I behave myself? you know his impetuosity of temper. Argument will avail nothing; and his discourse of late, has only increased my apprehensions for him. At first, I affected not to understand him, and reasoned indirectly in general maxims; he in turn affected not to understand me. If I endeavour to touch him a little more to the quick, he answers sententiously, and imagines he has refuted me. If I reply and enforce my argument, he flies into a passion, and talks in a manner so unfriendly, that a real friend knows not how to answer him. You may believe that, on this occasion, I am neither timid nor bashful; when we are doing our duty, we are too apt to be proud and tenacious; but pride has nothing to do here; it is necessary I should succeed; and unsuccessful attempts will only prejudice better means. I hardly dare enter with him into any argument, for I every day experience the truth of what you told me, that he is a better reasoner than I, and that the way to win him to my party is not to irritate him by dispute.

Besides, he looks a little cold upon me at present. Appearances would make one apt to think he is uneasy at my importunity. How this weakness debases a man in so many respects superior to the rest of mankind! the great, the sublime Lord B—, stands in awe of his friend,
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his creature, his pupil ! it even seems by some words he has let fall concerning the choice of his residence if he does not marry, that he has a mind to try my fidelity by opposing it to my interest. He well knows I ought not, neither can I leave him. No, I will do my duty and follow my benefactor. If I were base and mean, what should I gain by my perfidy ? Eloisa and her generous husband would not trust the education of their children to one who hath betrayed his friend. You have often told me, that the inferior passions are not easily converted from their pursuit ; but that the superior ones may be armed against themselves. I imagined, I might be able to make use of that maxim in the present case. In fact, the motives of compassion, of a contempt for the prejudices of the world, of habit, of every thing that determines my Lord B—— on this occasion, are of that inferior nature, and elude all my attacks : whereas true love is inseparable from generosity, and by that one always has some hold of him. I have attempted that indirect method, and despair not of success. It may seem cruel ; and, to say truth, I have not done it without some repugnance : all circumstances however considered, I conceive I am doing service even to Laura herself. What would she do in the rank to which she might be raised by marriage, but expose her former ignominy ? but, how great may she not be in remaining what she is ! If I know any thing of that extraordinary young lady, she is better formed to enjoy the sacrifice she has made, than the rank she ought to refuse. If this resource fails me, there remains one more in the

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magistracy, on account of their difference of religion ; but this method shall not be taken, till I am reduced to the last extremity, and have tried every other in vain. Whatever may happen, I shall spare nothing to prevent so unworthy and disgraceful an alliance. Believe me, my dear Wolmar, I shall be tenacious of your esteem to the latest hour of my life, and whatever my Lord may write to you, whatever you may have said, depend on it, cost what it will, while this heart beats within my breast, Lauretta Pisana shall not be lady B——.

If you approve of my measures, this letter needs no answer ; if you think me in any wise mistaken, oblige me with your instructions. But be expeditious, for there is not a moment to lose. I shall have my letter directed by a strange hand : do the same by your answer. After having read what I have written, please, also, to burn my letter, and be silent as to its contents. This is the first and the only secret I ever desired you to conceal from my two cousins : and if I had dared to confide more in my own judgment, you yourself should have known nothing of it *.

* For the better understanding this letter, the reader should have been made acquainted with the adventures of Lord B—, which at first I had indeed some notion of inserting in this collection. But, on second thoughts, I could not resolve to spoil the simplicity of this history of the two lovers, with the romance of his. It is better to leave something to the reader's imagination.

L E T.

L E T T E R CXLIX.

Mrs. WOLMAR to Mrs. ORBE.

THE courier from Italy seemed only to wait your departure, for his own arrival ; as if to punish you for having staid only for him. Not that I myself made the pretty discovery of the cause of your loitering ; it was my husband who observed, that after the horses had been put to at eight o'clock, you deferred your departure till eleven ; not out of regard to us, but for a reason easy to be guessed at, from your asking twenty times, if it was ten o'clock, because the post generally goes by at that time.

Yes, my dear cousin, you are caught ; you cannot deny it. In spite of the prophetic Chaillot, her Clara, so wild, or rather so discreet, has not been so to the end. You are caught in the same toils from which you took so much pains to extricate your friend, and have not been able to preserve that liberty yourself, to which you restored me. It is my turn to laugh now. Ah my dear friend, one ought to have your talents to know how to laugh like you, and give even to raillery the affecting turn and appearance of kindness. Besides, what a difference in our situation ! with what face can I divert myself with an evil, of which I am the cause, and from which you have taken upon yourself to free me. There is not a sentiment in your breast that does not awake a sense of gratitude in mine ; even your weakness being in you the effect of vir-

virtue. It is this which consoles and diverts me. My errors are to be lamented ; but one may laugh at the false modesty which makes you blush at a passion as innocent as yourself.

But to return to your Italian courier, and leave moralizing for a while. This courier then, who has been so long in coming, you will ask what he has brought us. Nothing but good news of our friends, and a letter as big as a packet for you. O ho ! I see you smile and take breath now. As the letter is sent you, however, you will doubtless wait patiently to know what it contains. It may yet nevertheless be of some estimation, even though it did not come when expected ; for it breathes such a tender—but I will only write news to you, and I dare say what I was going to say is none.

With that letter is come another from Lord B——, to my husband, with a great many compliments also for us. This contains some real news, which is so much the more unexpected, as the first was silent on the subject. Our friends at Rome were to set out the next day for Naples, where Lord B—— has some business ; and from whence they are to go to see mount Vesuvius.—Can you conceive, my dear, that such a sight can be entertaining ? but on their return to Rome, think, Clara, guess what may happen.—Lord B—— is on the point of being married—not, I thank heaven, to that unworthy marchioness, who he tells us, on the contrary, is much indisposed. To whom then ? —— To Laura, the amiable Laura, who —— yet, what a marriage ! our friend
says

says not a word about it. Immediately after the marriage, they will all three set out and come thither, to take their future measures. What they are to be, my husband has not told me; but he expects that St. Preux will stay with us.

I must confess to you his silence gives me some little uneasiness; I cannot see clearly through it. I think I see an odd peculiarity of circumstances, and contest of human passions absolutely unintelligible. I cannot see how so good a man should contract so lasting an affection for so bad a woman as the marchioness, or indeed, how a woman of such a violent and cruel temper could entertain so ardent a love, if one may so call her guilty passion, for a man of so different a disposition. Neither can I imagine, how a young creature, so generous, affectionate and disinterested as Laura, could be able to support her first dissoluteness of manners; how that flattering and deceitful tenderness of heart, which misleads our sex, should recover her; how love, which is the ruin of so many modest women, should make her chaste.

Will lady B—— then come hither? hither, my dear Clara! what do you think of it? after all, what a prodigy must that astonishing woman be, who, ruined by a dissolute and abandoned education, was reclaimed by her tenderness of heart, and whom love hath conducted to virtue! Ought any one to admire her more than I, who have acted quite contrary; who was led astray by inclination, when every thing else conspired to conduct me in the paths of virtue. I sunk not so low, it is true; but have I raised myself like her?

her? have I avoided so many snares, and made such sacrifices as she has made? from the lowest ignominy she has risen to the highest degree of honour, and is a thousand times more respectable than if she had never fallen. She has sense and virtue: what needs she more to resemble us? if it be impossible for a woman to repair the errors of her youth, what right have I to more indulgence than she? with whom can I hope to stand excused, and to what respect can I pretend, if I refuse to respect her?

And yet, though my heart tells me this, my heart speaks against it; and, without being able to tell why, I cannot think it right that Lord B— should contract such a marriage, and that his friend should be concerned in the affair. Such is the force of prejudice! so difficult is it to shake off the yoke of public opinion! which, nevertheless, generally induces us to be unjust: the past good is effaced by the present evil; but, is the past evil ever effaced by any present good?

I hinted to my husband my uneasiness, as to the conduct of St. Preux in this affair. He seems, said I, to be ashamed to speak of it to my cousin: I know he is incapable of baseness, but he is too easy, and may have too much indulgence for the foibles of a friend.—No, answered he, he has done what he ought, and I know will continue to do so, this is all I am at liberty to tell you at present of the matter; but St. Preux is honest, and I will engage for him, you will be satisfied with his conduct.—It is impossible, Clara, that Wolmar can deceive me, or St. Preux him. So positive an assurance therefore

fore fully satisfied me ; and made me suspect my scruples to be the effect of a false delicacy, and that if I was less vain and more equitable, I should find Laura more deserving the rank of lady B——.

But to take leave of her for the present, and return to ourselves. Don't you perceive too well, in reading this letter, that our friends are likely to return sooner than we expected ? and is not your heart a little affected by it ? does it not flutter, and beat quicker than ordinary ? that heart too susceptible, and too nearly akin to mine ? is it not apprehensive of the danger of living familiarly with a beloved object ? to see him every day ? to sleep under the same roof ? and if my errors did not lessen me in your esteem, does not my example give you reason to fear for yourself ? In your younger years, how many apprehensions for my safety did not your good sense and friendship suggest, which a blind passion made me despise ! It is now, my dear friend, my turn to be apprehensive for you, and I have the better claim to your regard, as what I have to offer is founded on sad experience. Attend to me then, ere it be too late ; lest, having past half your life in lamenting my errors, you should pass the other in lamenting your own. Above all things, place not too great a confidence in your gaiety of temper, which, though it may be a security to those who have nothing to fear, generally betrays those who are in real danger. You, my dear Clara, once laughed at love, but that was because you were a stranger to the passion, and not having felt its power, you thought yourself above its attacks. Love is avenged, and laughs in its turn at you. Learn to distrust its deceit-
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ful mirth, lest it should one day cost you an equal portion of grief. It is time, my dear friend, to lay you open to yourself; for hitherto you have not taken that interesting view: you are mistaken in your own character, and know not how to set a just value upon yourself. You confide in the opinion of Chaillot; who, because of your vivacity of disposition, judged you to be little susceptible of heart; but a heart like yours was beyond her talents to penetrate. Chaillot was incapable of knowing you, nor does any person in the world know you truly but myself. I have left you in your mistake so long as it could be of service to you, but at present it may be hurtful, and therefore it is necessary to undeceive you.

You are lively, and imagine yourself to have but little sensibility. How much, alas! are you deceived: your vivacity itself proves evidently the contrary. Is it not always exerted on sentimental subjects? does not even your pleasantry come from the heart? your raillery is a greater proof of your affection than the compliments of others; you smile, but your smiles penetrate our hearts; you laugh, but your laughter draws from us the tears of affection: and I have remarked, that among those who are indifferent to you, you are always serious.

If you really were no other than you pretend to be, tell me, what motive could have so forcibly united us? where had been those bonds of unparalleled friendship that now subsist between us? By what miracle should such an attachment give the preference to a heart so little capable of it? Can she who lived but
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for her friend, be incapable of love? she who would have left father, husband, relations, and country to have followed her? what have I done in comparison of this! I, who have confessedly a susceptible heart, and permitted myself to love; yet, with all my sensibility, have hardly been able to return your friendship! these contradictions have instilled into your head as whimsical an idea of your own character as such a giddy brain can conceive: which is, to conceit yourself at once the warmest friend and the coldest lover. Incapable of disowning these gentle ties with which you perceived you were bound, you thought yourself incapable of being fettered by any other. You thought nothing in the world could affect you but Eloisa; as if those hearts which are by nature susceptible, could be affected but by one object, and as if, because you loved no other than me, I could be the proper object of your affection. You pleasantly asked me once, if souls were of a different sex. No, my dear, the soul is of no sex; but its affections make that distinction, and you begin to be too sensible of it. Because the first lover that offered himself did not affect you, you immediately concluded no other could; because you was not in love with your suitor, you concluded you could never be in love with any one. When he became your husband, however, you loved him, and that with so ardent an affection, that it injured even the intimacy with your friend: that heart, so little susceptible, as you pretend, could annex to love as tender a supplement to satisfy the fond desires of a worthy man.

Ah

E L O I S A. 71

Ah my poor cousin! it is your task for the future to resolve your own doubts, and if it be true

Cb'un freddo amante è mal sicuro amico.

That a cold lover is a faithless friend,

I am greatly afraid I have at present one reason more than ever I had to rely upon you. But to go on with what I had to say to you on this subject.

I suspect that you were in love much sooner than you perhaps imagine; or at least, that the same inclination which ruined me would have seduced you, had I not been first caught in the snare. Can you conceive a sentiment so natural and agreeable, could be so slow in its birth? Can you conceive that at our age, we could either of us live in a familiarity with an amiable young man without danger, or that the conformity so general in our taste and inclination, should not extend to this particular? No, my dear, you, I am certain, would have loved him, if I had not loved him first. Less weak, though not less susceptible, you might have been more prudent than I, without being more happy. But what inclination would have prevailed on your generous mind, over the horror you would have felt at the infidelity of betraying your friend! it was our friendship that saved you from the snares of love: you respected my lover with the same friendship, and thus redeemed your heart at the expence of mine.

These conjectures are not so void of foundation as you may imagine; and had I a mind to recollect those times which I could wish to forget, it would not be difficult for me to trace even in the care you imagined you took only in my concerns, a farther care, still more interesting, in those of the object of my affection. Not daring to love him yourself, you encouraged me to do it; you thought each of us necessary to the happiness of the other, and therefore, that heart, which has not its equal in the world, loved us both the more tenderly. Be assured, that had it not been for your own weakness, you would not have been so indulgent to me; but you would have reproached yourself for a just severity towards me, with an imputation of jealousy. You were conscious of having no right to contend with a passion in me, which ought nevertheless to have been subdued; and, being more fearful of betraying your friend than of not acting discreetly, you thought, in offering up your own happiness to ours, you had made a sufficient sacrifice to virtue.

This, my dear Clara, is your history; thus hath your despotic friendship laid me under the necessity of being obliged to you for my shame, and of thanking you for my errors. Think not, however, that I would imitate you in this. I am no more disposed to follow your example than you mine; and as you have no reason to fear falling into my errors, I have no longer, thank heaven! the same reasons for granting you indulgence. What better use can I make of that virtue to which you restored me, than to make it instrumental in the preservation of yours?

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Let me therefore give you my farther advice on the present occasion. The long absence of our preceptor has not lessened your regard for him. Your being left again at liberty, and his return, have given rise to opportunity, which love hath been ingenuous enough to improve. It is not a new sentiment produced in your heart; it is only one which, long concealed there, has at length seized this occasion to discover itself. Proud enough to avow it to yourself, you are perhaps impatient to confess it to me. That confession might seem to you almost necessary to make it quite innocent; in becoming a crime in your friend it ceased to be one in you, and perhaps you only gave yourself up to the passion you so many years contended with the more effectually to cure your friend.

I was sensible, my dear, of all this; and was little alarmed at a passion which I saw would be my own protection, and on account of which you have nothing to reproach yourself. The winter we passed together in peace and friendship, gave me yet more hopes of you; for I saw that so far from losing your vivacity, you seemed to have improved it. I frequently observed you affectionate, earnest, attentive: but frank in your professions, ingenuous even in your raillery, unreserved and open, and in your liveliest sallies, the picture of innocence.

Since our conversation in the *Elysium*, I have not so much reason to be satisfied with you. I find you frequently sad and pensive. You take as much pleasure in being alone as with your friend: you have not changed your language, but your accent; you are more cautious in your

pleasantry; you don't mention him so often; one would think you were in constant fear lest he should overhear you; and it is easy to see by your uneasiness that you want to hear from him, much oftener than you confess.

I tremble, my good cousin, lest you should not be sensible of the worst of your disorder, and that the shaft has pierced deeper than you seem to be aware of. Probe your heart, my dear, to the bottom; and then tell me, again I repeat it, tell me if the most prudent woman does not run a risk by being long in the company of a beloved object; tell me if the confidence which ruined me can be entirely harmless to you; you are both at liberty; this is the very circumstance that makes opportunity dangerous. In a mind truly virtuous, there is no weakness will get the better of conscience, and I agree with you, that one has always fortitude enough to avoid committing a wilful crime: but alas! what is a constant protection against human weakness? Reflect however, on consequences; think on the effects of shame. We must pay a due respect to ourselves, if we expect to receive it from others; for how can we flatter ourselves, that others will pay to us what we have not for ourselves? or where can we think she will stop in the career of vice, who sets out without fear? These arguments I should use even to women, who pay no regard to religion and morality, and have no rule of conduct but the opinion of others: but with you, whose principles are those of virtue and Christianity, who are sensible of, and respect, your duty, who know and follow other rules than those

those of public opinion, your first honour is to stand excused by your own conscience, and that is the most important.

Would you know where you are wrong in this whole affair? It is, I say again, in being ashamed of entertaining a sentiment which you have only to declare, to render it perfectly innocent: but with all your vivacity, no creature in the world is more timid. You affect plainness only to shew your courage, your poor heart trembling all the while for fear. In pretending to ridicule your passion, you do exactly like the children, who sing in the dark because they are afraid. O my dear friend, reflect on what you yourself have often said; it is a false shame which leads to real disgrace, and virtue never blushes at any thing but what is criminal. Is love in itself a crime? does it not, on the contrary, consist of the most refined as well as the most pleasing of all inclinations? is not its end laudable and virtuous? does it ever enter into base and vulgar minds? does it not animate only the great and noble? does it not ennoble their sentiments? does it not raise them even above themselves? Alas! if to be prudent and virtuous we must be insensible to love, among whom could virtue find its votaries on earth? among the refuse of nature and the dregs of mankind.

Why then do you reproach yourself? have you not made choice of a worthy man? is he not disengaged? are not you so too? does he not deserve all your esteem? has he not the greatest regard for you? will you not be even

too happy in conferring happiness on a friend so worthy of that name; paying, with your hand and heart, the debts long ago contracted by your friend; and in doing him honour by raising him to yourself, as a reward to unsuccessful, to persecuted merit.

I see what petty scruples still lie in your way. The receding from a declared resolution, by taking a second husband; the exposing your weakness to the world; the marrying a needy adventurer; for low minds, always lavish of scandal, will doubtless so call him. These are the reasons which make you rather ashamed of your passion than willing to justify it; that make you desirous of stifling it in your bosom, rather than render it legitimate. But pray does the shame lie in marrying the man one loves, or in loving without marrying him? between these lies your choice. The regard you owe to the deceased requires you should respect his widow so much, as rather to give her a husband than a gallant: and, if your youth obliges you to make choice of one to supply his place, is it not paying a further regard to his memory, to fix that choice upon the man he most esteemed when living?

As to his inferiority in point of fortune, I shall perhaps only offend you in replying to so frivolous an objection, when it is opposed to good sense and virtue. I know of no debasing inequality, but that which arises either from character or education. To whatever rank a man of a mean disposition and low principle may rise, an alliance with him will always be scandalous. But a man educated in the sentiments

of

of virtue and honour is equal to any other in the world, and may take place in whatever rank he pleases. You know what were the sentiments of your father, when your friend was proposed for me. His family is reputable tho' obscure, he is every where deservedly esteemed. With all this, was he the lowest of mankind, he would deserve your consideration : for it is surely better to derogate from nobility than virtue ; and the wife of a mechanic is more reputable than the mistress of a prince.

I have a glimpse of another kind of embarrassment, in the necessity you lie under of making the first declaration : for, before he presumes to aspire to you, it is necessary you should give him permission ; this is one of the circumstances justly attending an inequality of rank, which often obliges the superior to make the most mortifying advances.

As to this difficulty I can easily forgive you, and even confess it would appear to me of real consequence, if I could not find out a method to remove it. I hope you depend so far on me as to believe this may be brought about without your being seen in it ; and on my part, I depend so much on my measures, that I shall undertake it with assurance of success : for notwithstanding what you both formerly told me of the difficulty of converting a friend into a lover, if I can read that heart which I too long studied, I don't believe that on this occasion, any great art will be necessary. I propose, therefore, to charge myself with this negociation, to the end that you may indulge yourself in the pleasure of his return, without reserve, regret, danger, or scan-

dal. Ah my dear cousin ! how delighted shall I be to unite for ever two hearts so well formed for each other, and which have been long united in mine. May they still (if possible) be more closely united ! may we have but one heart amongst us ! Yes, Clara, you will serve your friend by indulging your love, and I shall be more certain of my own sentiments, when I shall no longer make a distinction between him and you.

But if, notwithstanding what I have alledged, you will not give into this project, my advice is, at all events, to banish this dangerous man ; always to be dreaded by one or the other : for, be it as it may, the education of our children is still less important to us than the virtue of their mothers. I leave you to reflect during your journey, on what I have written. We will talk further about it on your return.

I send this letter directly to Geneva ; lest, as you were to lie but one night at Lausanne, it should not find you there. Pray bring me a good account of that little republic. From the agreeable description, I should think you happy in the opportunity of seeing it ; if I could set any store by pleasures, purchased with the absence of my friends. I never loved grandeur, and at present I hate it, for having deprived me of so many years of your company. Neither you nor I, my dear, went to buy our wedding cloaths at Geneva ; and yet, however deserving your brother may be, I much doubt whether your sister-in-law will be more happy, with her Flanders-lace and India silks, than we in our native simplicity. I charge you,
how-

however, notwithstanding my ill-natured reflections, to engage them to celebrate their nuptials at Clarens. My father hath written to yours, and my husband to the bride's mother, to invite them hither. Their letters you will find inclosed: please to deliver them, and enforce their invitations with your interest. This is all I could do, in order to be present at the ceremony; for I declare to you, I would not upon any account leave my family. Adieu. Let me have a line from you, at least to let me know when I am to expect you here. It is now the second day since you left me, and I know not how I shall support two days more without you.

P. S. While I was writing this letter, Miss Harriot truly must give herself the air of writing to her mamma too. As I always like children should write their own thoughts, and not those which are dictated to them, I indulged her curiosity; and let her write just what she pleased without altering a word. This makes the third letter inclosed. I doubt, however, whether this is what you will look for in casting your eye over the contents of the packet. But, for the other letter you need not look long, as you will not find it. It is directed to you at Clarens; and at Clarens only it ought to be read: so take your measures accordingly.

L E T T E R C L.

H A R R I O T *to her Mother.*

W H E R E are you then, mamma? They say at Geneva; which is such a long, long way off, that one must ride two days, all day long, to reach you: surely, mamma, you don't intend to go round the world? my little pappia is set out this morning for Etange; my little grand pappia is gone a hunting; my little mamma is gone into her closet to write; and there is nobody with me but Parnette and the Frenchwoman. Indeed, mamma, I don't know how it is; but, since our good friend has left us, we are all scattered about strangely. You began first, mamma; you soon began to be tired, when you had no-body left to tease: but what is much worse since you are gone, is, that my little mamma is not so good-humoured as when you were here. My little boy is very well, but he does not love you; because you did not dance him yesterday as you used to do. As for me, I believe I should love you a little bit still, if you would return quickly, that one might not be so dull. But, if you would make it up with me quite, you must bring my little boy something that would please him. To quiet him indeed, would not be very easy, you would be puzzled to know what to do with him. O that our good friend was but here now! for it is as he said, my fine fan is broke to pieces, my blue skirt is torn all to bits, my white frock is in tatters; my mittins are not worth a farthing.

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Fare you well, mamma, I must here end my letter; for my little mamma has finished hers, and is coming out of her closet. I think her eyes are red, but I durst not say so: in reading this, however, she will see I observed it. My good mamma you are certainly very naughty, to make my little mamma cry.

P. S. Give my love to my grand pappa, to my uncles, to my new aunt and her mamma, and to every body: tell them I would kiss them all, and you too, mamma; but that you are all so far off, I can't reach you.

L E T T E R C L I.

Mrs. ORBE to Mrs. WOLMAR.

I Cannot leave Lausanne without writing you a line to acquaint you of my safe arrival here; not however so chearfully disposed as I could wish. I promised myself much pleasure in a journey, which you have been so often tempted to take; but, in refusing to accompany me, you have made it almost disagreeable; and how should it be otherwise? when it is troublesome, I have all the trouble to myself, and when it is tolerably agreeable, I regret your not being with me to partake of the pleasure. I had nothing to say, it is true, against your reasons for staying at home; but you must not think I was therefore satisfied with them. If you do, indeed, my good cousin, you are mistaken; for

the very reason why I am dissatisfied is, that I have no right to be so. I wonder you are not ashamed of yourself, to have always the best of the argument, and to prevent your friend from having what she likes, without leaving her one good reason to find fault with you. All had gone to rack and ruin, no doubt, had you left your husband, your family, and your little marmottes in the lurch for one week; it had been a wild scheme, to be sure; but I should have liked you a hundred times the better for it: whereas, in aiming to be all perfection, you are good for nothing at all, and are only fit to keep company with angels.

Notwithstanding our past disagreement, I could not help being moved at the sight of my friends and relations; who, on their part, received me with pleasure; or, at least, with a profusion of civilities. I can give you no account of my brother, till I am better acquainted with him. With a tolerable figure, he has a good deal of the formal air of the country he comes from. He is serious, cold, and I think has a surly haughtiness in his disposition, which makes me apprehensive for his wife, that he will not prove so tractable a husband as ours; but will take upon him a good deal of the lord and master.

My father was so delighted to see me, that he even left unfinished the perusal of an account of a great battle which the French, as if to verify the prediction of our friend, have lately gained in Flanders. Thank heaven, he was not there! Can you conceive the intrepid lord B—— would stand to see his countrymen run
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away, or that he would have joined them in their flight? No, never; he would sooner have rushed a thousand times on death.

But, a-propos, of our friend,—our other friend hath not written for some time. Was not yesterday the day for the courier to come from Italy? If you receive any letters, I hope you will not forget I am a party concerned in the news.

Adieu, my dear cousin; I must set out. I shall expect your letters at Geneva; where we hope to arrive to-morrow by dinner-time. As for the rest, you may be assured, that, by some means or other, you shall be at the wedding; and that, if you absolutely will not come to Lausanne, I will come with my whole company to plunder Clarens, and drink up all the wine that is to be found in the town.

LETTER CLII.

Mrs. ORBE to Mrs. WOLMAR.

UPON my word, my dear, you have read me a charming lecture! you keep it up to a miracle! you seem to depend, however, too much on the salutary effect of your sermons. Without pretending to judge whether they would formerly have lulled your preceptor to sleep, I can assure you they do not put me to sleep at present; on the contrary, that which you sent me yesterday was so far from affecting me with drowsiness that it kept me awake all night. I bar, however, the remarks of that Argus your husband,

if he should see the letter. But I will write in some order, and I protest to you, you had better burn your fingers than shew it him.

If I should be very methodical, and recapitulate with you article for article, I should usurp your privilege; I had better, therefore, set them down as they come into my head; to affect a little modesty also, and not give you too much fair-play, I will not begin with our travellers, or the courier from Italy. At the worst, if it should so happen, I shall only have my letter to write over again, and to reverse it, by putting the beginning at the latter end. I am determined however to begin with the supposed Lady B—. I can assure you, I am offended at the very title; nor shall I ever forgive St. Preux for permitting her to take it, Lord B— for conferring it on her, or you for acknowledging it. Shall Eloisa Wolmar receive Lauretta Pisana into her house! permit her to live with her!—think of it child, again. Would not such a condescension in you be the most cruel mortification to her? can you be ignorant that the air you breathe is fatal to infamy? will the poor unfortunate dare to mix her breath with yours? will she dare to approach you? She would be as much affected by your presence as a creature possessed would be at the sacred relics in the hand of the exorcist: your looks would make her sink into the earth; the very sight of you would kill her.

Not that I despise the unhappy Laura; God forbid! on the contrary, I admire and respect her, the more as her reformation is heroic and extraordinary. But is it sufficient to authorise
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those mean comparisons by which you debase yourself ; as if in the indulgence of the greatest weakness, there was not something in true love that is a constant security to our person, and which made us tenacious of our honour ? but I comprehend and excuse you. You have but a confused view of low and distant objects : you look down upon your sublime and elevated station upon the earth, and see no inequalities on its surface. Your devout humility knows how to take an advantage even of your virtue.

But what end will all this serve ? will our natural sensations make the less impression ? Will our self-love be less active ? in spite of your arguments you feel a repugnance at this match : you tax your sensations with pride ; you would strive against them and attribute them to prejudice. But tell me, my dear, how long has the scandal attendant on vice consisted in mere opinion ? what friendship do you think can possibly subsist between you and a woman, before whom one cannot mention chastity, or virtue without making her burst into tears of shame, without renewing her sorrows, without even insulting her penitence ? believe me, my dear, we may respect Laura, but we ought not to see her ; to avoid her is the regard which modest women owe to her merit : it would be cruel to make her suffer in our company.

I will go farther ; you say your heart tells you this marriage ought not to take place. Is not this as much as to tell you it will not. Your friend says nothing about it in his letter ! in the letter which he wrote to me ! and yet you say that letter is a very long one—and then comes
the

the discourse between you and your husband—that husband of yours is a fly-boots, and ye are a couple of cheats thus to trick me out of the news ye have heard. But then your husband's sentiments!—methinks his sentiments were not so necessary; particularly for you who have seen the letter, nor indeed were they for me, who have not seen it: for I am more certain of the conduct of your friend from my own sentiments, than from all the wisdom of philosophy.

See there now!—did I not tell you so? that intruder will be thrusting himself in, no body knows how. For fear he should come again, however, as we are now got into his chapter, let us go through it, that it may be over, and we may have nothing to do with him again.

Let us not bewilder ourselves with conjectures. Had you not been Eloisa, had not your friend been your lover, I know not what business he would now have had with you, nor what I should have had to do with him. All I know is, that if my ill stars had so ordered it that he had first made love to me, it had been all over with his poor head; for whether I am a fool or not, I should certainly have made him one. But what signifies what I might have been? let us come to what I am. Attached by inclination to you, from our earliest infancy, my heart has been in a manner absorbed by yours; affectionate and susceptible as I was, I of myself was incapable of love or sensibility. All my sentiments came from you; you alone stood in the place of the whole world, and I lived only to be your friend. Chaillot saw all this,
and

and founded on it the judgment she passed on me. In what particular, my dear, have you found her mistaken?

You know I looked upon your friend as a brother: as the son of my mother was the lover of my friend. Neither was it my reason, but my heart that gave him this preference. I should have been even more susceptible than I am, had I never experienced any other love. I caressed you, in caressing the dearest part of yourself, and the cheerfulness which attended my embraces was a proof of their purity. For doth a modest woman ever behave so to the man she loves? did you behave thus to him? no, Eloisa, love in a female heart is cautious and timid; reserve and modesty are all its advances; it discloses by endeavouring to hide itself, and whenever it confers the favour of its caresses, it well knows how to set a value upon them. Friendship is prodigal, but love is avaricious and sparing.

I confess indeed, that too intimate connections at his age and mine are dangerous; but, with both our hearts engaged by the same object, we were so accustomed to place it between us, that, without annihilating you at least, it was impossible for us to come together. Even that familiarity, so dangerous on every other occasion, was then my security. Our sentiments depend on our ideas, and when these have once taken a certain turn, they are not easily perverted. We had talked together too much in one strain, to begin upon another; we had advanced too far to return back the way we came: love is jealous of its prerogative, and will

will make its own progress ; it does not chuse that friendship should meet it half-way. In short, I am still of the same opinion, that criminal caresses never take place between those that have been long used to the endearing embraces of innocence. In aid of my sentiments, came the man destined by heaven to constitute the momentary happiness of my life. You know, cousin, he was young, well made, honest, complaisant, and solicitous to please ; it is true, he was not so great a master in love as your friend ; but it was me that he loved : and, when the heart is free, the passion which is addressed to ourselves, hath always in it something contagious. I returned his affections therefore, with all that remained of mine, and his share was such as left him no room to complain of his choice. With all this, what had I to apprehend ? I will even go so far as to confess that the prerogatives of the husband, joined to the duties of a wife, relaxed for a moment the ties of friendship ; and that, after my change of condition, giving myself up to the duties of my new station, I became a more affectionate wife than I was a friend : but in returning to you, I have brought back two hearts instead of one, and have not since forgot that I alone am charged with that double obligation.

What, my dear friend, shall I say farther ? at the return of our old preceptor, I had, as it were, a new acquaintance to cultivate : methought I looked upon him with very different eyes ; my heart fluttered as he saluted me, in a manner I had never felt before ; and the more pleasure that emotion gave me, the more it made

me

me afraid. I was alarmed at a sentiment which seemed criminal, and which perhaps would not have existed had it not been innocent. I too plainly perceived that he was not, nor could be any longer your lover ; I was too sensible that his heart was disengaged and that mine was so too : You know the rest, my dear cousin ; my fears, my scruples were, I see, as well known to you as to myself. My unexperienced heart, was so intimidated by sensations so new to it, that I even reproached myself for the earnest desire I felt to rejoin you ; as if that desire had not been the same before the return of our friend. I was uneasy that he should be in the very place where I myself most inclined to be, and believe I should not have been so much displeased to find myself less desirous of it, as at conceiving that it was not entirely on your account. At length, however, I returned to you, and began to recover my confidence. I was less ashamed of my weakness after having confessed it to you. I was even less ashamed of it in your company : I thought myself protected in turn, and ceased to be afraid of myself. I resolved, agreeable to your advice, not to change my conduct towards him. Certainly a greater reserve would have been a kind of declaration, and I was but too likely to let slip involuntary ones, to induce me to make any directly. I continued, therefore, to trifle with him through bashfulness, and to treat him familiarly through modesty : but perhaps all this, not being so natural as formerly, was not attended with the same propriety, nor exerted to the same degree. From being a trifler, I turned a downright fool ; and what

what perhaps increased my assurance was, I found I could be so with impunity. Whether it was your example that inspired me, or whether it be that Eloisa refines every thing that approaches her, I found myself perfectly tranquil, while nothing remained of my first emotions, but the most pleasing, yet peaceful sensations, which required nothing more than the tranquillity I possessed.

Yes, my dear friend, I am as susceptible and affectionate as you ; but I am so in a different manner. Perhaps, with more lively passions, I am less able to govern them ; and that very cheerfulness, which has been so fatal to the innocence of others, has preserved mine. Not that it has been always easy, I confess ; any more than it is to remain a widow at my years, and not be sometimes sensible that the day-time constitutes but one half of our lives. Nay, notwithstanding the grave face you put on the matter, I imagine your case does not differ in that greatly from mine. Mirth and pleasantry may then afford no unseasonable relief ; and perhaps be a better preservative than graver lessons. How many times, in the stillness of the night, when the heart is all open to itself, have I driven impertinent thoughts out of my mind, by studying tricks for the next day ! how many times have I not averted the danger of a private conversation by an extravagant fancy ! There is always, my dear, when one is weak, a time wherein gaiety becomes serious ; but that time will not come to me.

These are at least my sentiments of the matter, and what I am not ashamed to confess in
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answer to yours. I readily confirm all that I said in the *Elysium*, as to the growing passion I perceived, and the happiness I had enjoyed during the winter. I indulged myself freely in the pleasing reflections of being always in company with the person I loved, while I desired nothing farther; and, if that opportunity had subsisted, I should have coveted no other. My cheerfulness was the effect of contentment, and not of artifice. I turned the pleasure of conversing with him into drollery, and perceived that in contenting myself with laughing, I was not paving the way for future sorrow.

I could not indeed help thinking sometimes, that my continual playing upon him gave him less real displeasure than he affected. The cunning creature was not angry at being offended, and if he was a long time before he could be brought to temper, it was only, that he might enjoy the pleasure of being entreated. Again, I in my turn have frequently laid hold of such occasions, to express a real tenderness for him, appearing all the while to make a jest of him: so that you would have been puzzled to say which was the most of a child. One day I remember that you was absent, he was playing at Chefs with your husband, while I and the little French-woman were diverting ourselves at shuttlecock in the same room; I gave her the signal, and kept my eye on our philosopher; who, I found, by the boldness of his looks, and the readiness of his moves, had the best of the game. As the table was small, the Chefs-board hung over its edge; I watched my opportunity, therefore, and without seeming to design it, gave the board

board a knock with a back stroke of my racquet, and overturned the whole game on the floor. You never in your life saw a man in such a passion: he was even so enraged that when I gave him his choice of a kiss or a box in the ear by way of penance, he suddenly turned away from me as I presented him my cheek. I asked pardon, but to no purpose: he was inflexible, and I doubt not that he would have left me on my knees, had I condescended to kneel for it. I put an end to his resentment, however by another offence, which made him forget the former, and we were better friends than ever.

I could never have extricated myself so well by any other means; and I once perceived that, if our play had become serious, it might have proved too much so. This was one evening when he played with us that simple and affecting duo of Leo's *Vado a morir ben mio*. You sung indeed with indifference enough: but I did not; for just as we came to the most pathetic part of the song, he leaned forward, and as my hand lay upon the harpsichord, imprinted on it a kiss, whose impression I felt at my heart. I am not very well acquainted with the ardent kisses of love! but this I can say that mere friendship, not even ours, ever gave or received any thing like that. After such moments, what is the consequence of reflecting on them in solitude, and of bearing him constantly in memory? for my part, I was so much affected at the time, that I sung out of tune, and put the music out. We went to dancing, I made the philosopher dance; we eat little or nothing; sat up very late; and, though

though I went to bed weary, I only dosed till morning.

I have therefore very good reason for not laying any restraint on my humour, or changing my manners. The time that will make such an alteration necessary is so near, that it is not worth while to anticipate it. The time to be prudent and reserved will come but too soon. While I am in my twenties, therefore, I shall make use of my privilege; for when once turned of thirty, people are no longer wild without being ridiculous; and your find-fault of a husband hath assurance enough to tell me already that I shall be allowed but six months longer to dress a fal-lad with my fingers. Patience! to retort his sarcasm, however, I tell him I will dress it for him in that manner for these six years to come, and if I do, I protest to you he shall eat it;—but to return from my ramble. If we have not the absolute command over our sentiments, we have at least some over our conduct. I could, without doubt, have requested of heaven a heart more at ease; but may I be able to my last hour, to plead at its dread tribunal, a life as innocent as that which I passed this winter! in fact, I have nothing in the least to reproach myself with, respecting the only man in whose power it might be to make me criminal. It is not quite the same, my dear, since his departure: being accustomed to think for him in his absence, I think of him every hour in the day, and, to confess the truth, find him more dangerous in idea than in person. When he is absent, I am over head and ears in love; when present, I am only whimsical. Let him return,

and I shall be cured of all my fears. The chagrin his absence gives me, however, is not a little aggravated by my uneasiness at his dream. If you have placed all to the account of love, therefore, you are mistaken; friendship has had part in my uneasiness. After the departure of our friends, your looks were pale and changed; I expected you every moment to fall sick. Not that I am credulous: I am only fearful. I know very well that a bad dream does not necessarily produce a sinister event; but I am always afraid lest such an event should succeed it. Not one night's rest could I get for that unlucky dream, till I saw you recover your former bloom. Could I have suspected the effects his anxiety would have had on me, without knowing any thing of it, I would certainly have given every thing I had in the world that he should have shewn himself when he came back so much like a fool from Villeneuve.

At length, however, my fears vanished with your suspicious looks; your health and appetite having a greater effect on me than your pleasantries. The arguments these sustained at table, against my apprehensions, in time dissipated them. To encrease our happiness our friend is on his return, and I am in every respect delighted. His return, so far from alarming me, gives me confidence; and as soon as we see him again, I shall fear nothing for your life, nor my repose. In the mean time be careful, dear cousin, of my friend; and be under no apprehensions for yours; she will take care of herself, I will engage for her. And yet I have still a pain at my heart—I feel an oppression which

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I cannot account for. Ah my dear! to think that we may one day part for ever! that one may survive the other! how unhappy will she be on whom that lot shall fall! she will either remain little worthy to live, or lifeless before her death.

You will ask me, to what purpose is all this vain lamentation? you will say, Fy on these ridiculous terrors! instead of talking of death let us chuse a more entertaining topic, and talk about your marriage. Your husband has indeed long entertained such a notion, and perhaps if he had never spoken of it to me, it would never have come into my head. I have since thought of it now and then, but always with disdain. It would be absolutely making an old woman of me; for, if I should have any children by a second marriage, I should certainly conceit myself the grandmother of those of the first. You are certainly very good to take upon yourself so readily to spare the blushes of your friend, and to look upon your taking that trouble as an instance of your charitable benevolence. For my own part nevertheless, I can see very well that all the reasons founded on your obliging sollicitude, are not equal to the least of mine against a second marriage.

To be serious, I am not mean-spirited enough to number among those reasons any reluctance I should have to break an engagement rashly made with myself, nor the fear of being censured for doing my duty, nor an inequality in point of fortune in a circumstance where that person reaps the greatest honour to whom the
other

other would be obliged for his: but, without repeating what I have so often told you concerning my case of independency and natural aversion to the marriage yoke, I will abide by only one objection, and this I draw from those sacred dictates which no body in the world pays a greater regard to than yourself. Remove this obstacle, cousin, and I give up the point. Amidst all those airs of mirth and drollery, which give you so much alarm, my conscience is perfectly easy. The remembrance of my husband excites not a blush; I even take pleasure to think him a witness of my innocence; for why should I be afraid to do that now he is dead, which I used to do when he was living? but will this be the case, Eloisa, if I should violate those sacred engagements which united us; if I should swear to another that everlasting love, which I have so often swore to him; if my divided heart should rob his memory of what it bestowed on his successor, and be incapable without offending one to discharge the obligations it owes the other? will not that form, now so pleasing to my imagination, fill me with horror and affright? will it not be ever present to poison my delight? and will not his remembrance, which now constitutes the happiness of my life, be my future torment? with what face can you advise me to take a second husband, after having vowed never to do the like yourself, as if the same reasons which you give me were not as applicable to yourself in the same circumstances? They were friends, you say, and loved each other. So much the worse. With what indignation will not his shade behold a man who was dear to him, usurp

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usurp his rights, and seduce his wife from her fidelity? in short, though it were true that I owed no obligation to the deceased, should I owe none to the dear pledge of his love? and can I believe he would ever have chosen me, had he foreseen that I should ever have exposed his only child to see herself undistinguish'd among the children of another? Another word, and I have done: who told you, pray, that all the obstacles between us arise from me? In answering for him, have you not rather consulted your will than your power? Or, were you certain of his consent, do you make no scruple to offer me a heart exhausted by a former passion? do you think that mine ought to be content with it, and that I might be happy with a man I could not make so? think better of it, my dear cousin. Not requiring a greater return of love than I feel, I should not be satisfied with less, and I am too virtuous a woman to think the pleasing my husband a matter of indifference. What security have you then for the completion of your hopes? Is the pleasure he may take in my company, which may be only the effect of friendship; is that transitory delight, which at his age may arise only from the difference of sex: is this, I say, a sufficient foundation? If such pleasure had produced any lasting sentiment, is it to be thought he would have been so profoundly silent, not only to me, but to you, and even to your husband, by whom an eclairsissement of that nature could not fail of being favourably received.

Has he ever opened his lips on this head to any one? in all the private conversations I have

had with him, he talked of no body but you. In those which you have had, did he ever say any thing of me? how can I imagine that, if he had concealed a secret of this kind in his breast, I should not have perceived him to be under some constraint, or that it would not, by some indiscretion or other, have escaped him? nay, since his departure, which of us does he most frequently mention in his letters? which of us is the subject of his dreams? I admire that you should think me so tender and susceptible, and should not at the same time suppose my heart would suggest all this. But I see through your device, my sweet friend; it is only to authorise your pretensions to reprisals, that you charge me with having formerly saved my heart at the expence of yours. But I am not so to be made the dupe of your subtilty. And so here is an end of my confession; which I have made, not to contradict, but to set you right; having nothing farther to say on this head, than to acquaint you with my resolution. You now know my heart as well, if not better, than I do. My honour, my happiness are equally dear to you as to myself; and, in the present tranquillity of your passions, you will be the best able to judge of the means to secure both the one and the other. Take my conduct therefore under your direction. I submit it entirely to you. Let us return to our natural state, and reciprocally change our employment; we shall both do the better for it: do you govern, and you shall find me tractable: let it be your place to direct what I should do, and it shall be mine to follow your directions.

Take

Take my heart, and inclose it up in yours ; what business have inseparables for two ? But to return to our travellers ; though, to say truth, I have already said so much about one, that I hardly dare speak a word about the other, for fear you should remark too great a difference in my stile, and that even my friendship for the generous Englishman should betray too much regard for the amiable Swiss. Besides, what can I say about letters I have not seen ? you ought at least to send me that of Lord B——. But you durst not send it without the other. 'Tis very well. You might, however, have done better. Well, recommend me to your duennas of twenty : they are infinitely more tractable than those of thirty.

I must revenge myself, however, by informing you of the effect of your fine reserve. It has only made me imagine the letter in question, that letter which breathes such a tender—only a hundred times more tender than it probably is. Out of spite, I take pleasure in conceiving it filled with soft expressions which cannot be in it ; so that if I am not passionately admired, I shall make you suffer for it. After all, I cannot see with what face you can talk to me of the Italian post. You prove in your letter that I was not in the wrong to wait for it, but for not having waited long enough. Had I stayed but one poor quarter of an hour longer, I should have met the packet, have laid hold of it first, and read it at my ease. It had then been my turn to make a merit of giving it you. But, since the grapes are so sour, you may keep the letters. I have two others which I would not change for them were

they better worth reading than I imagine they are. There is that of Harriot, I can assure you, even exceeds your own ; nor have either you or I, in all our lives, ever wrote any thing so pretty. And yet you give yourself airs forsooth of treating this prodigy as a little impertinent. Upon my word, I suspect that to arise from mere envy ; and, since I have discovered in her this new talent, I purpose, before you spoil her writing as you have done her speech, to establish between her apartment and mine an Italian post, from whence I will have no pilfering of packets.

Farewell, my dear friend, you will find inclosed the answers to your letters, which will give you no mean idea of my interest here. I would write to you something about this country and its inhabitants ; but it is high time to put an end to this volume of a letter. You have besides quite perplexed me with your strange fancies. As we have five or six days longer to stay here, and I shall have time to give another look at what I have already seen, you will be no loser by the delay ; and you may depend on my transmitting you another volume as big as this, before my departure.

L E T T E R CLIII.

Lord B—— to Mr. WOLMAR.

NO! my dear Wolmar, you were not mistaken : St. Preux is to be depended on ; but I am not ; and I have paid dear for the experience that hath convinced me of it.
With-

Without his assistance I should have been a dupe to the very proof to which I put his fidelity. You know that, to satisfy his notions of gratitude, and divert his mind with new objects, I pretended that my journey to Italy was of greater importance than it really was. To bid a final adieu to the attachments of my youth, and bring back a friend perfectly cured of his, were the fruits I promised myself from the voyage. I informed you that his dream, at Villeneuve, gave me some uneasiness for him. That dream made me even suspect the motives of his transport, on being told that you had chosen him preceptor of your children, and that he should pass the remainder of his life with you. The better to observe the effusions of his heart, I had at first removed all difficulties, by declaring my intention of settling also in your part of the world; and thus I prevented any of those objections his friendship might have made on account of leaving me. A change in my resolutions, however, made me soon alter my tale.

He had not seen the marchioness thrice, before we were both agreed in our opinion of her. Unfortunate woman! possessed of noble qualities, but without virtue! her ardent, sincere passion at first affected me, and nourished mine; but her passion was tinged with the blackness of her soul, and inspired me in the end with horror. When he had seen Laura, and knew her disposition; her beauty, her wit and unexampled attachment, I formed a resolution to make use of her to acquire a perfect knowledge of the situation of St. Preux. If I marry Laura, said I to him, it is not my intention to carry

her to London, where she may be known ; but to a place, where virtue is respected in whomsoever it is found : you will there discharge your duty of preceptor, and we shall still continue to live together. If I do not marry her, it is time for me, however, to think of settling. You know my house in Oxfordshire, and will make your choice, either to take upon you the education of Mr. Wolmar's children, or to accompany me in my retirement. To this, he made me just such an answer as I expected ; but I had a mind to observe his conduct. If, in order to spend his time at Clarens, he had promoted a marriage which he ought to have opposed, or on the contrary, preferred the honour of his friend to his own happiness ; in either case, I say, the experiment answered my end, and I knew what to think of the situation of his heart.

On trial, I found him to be such as I wished ; firmly resolved against the project I pretended to have formed, and ready with all his arguments to oppose it ; but I was continually in her company, and was moved by her tenderness and affliction. My heart, totally disengaged from the Marchioness, began to fix itself on her rival, by this constant intercourse. The sentiments of Laura increased the attachment she had before inspired ; and I began to be ashamed of sacrificing to that prejudice I despised, the esteem which I was so well convinced was due to her merit ; I began even to be in doubt, whether I had not laid myself under some obligation to do that merit justice, by the hopes I had given her, if not in words, at least by my actions. Though I
never

never promised her any thing, yet to have kept her in suspense and expectation for nothing, would be to deceive her ; and I could not help thinking such a deception extremely cruel. In short, annexing a kind of duty to my inclination, and consulting happiness more than reputation, I attempted to reconcile my passion to reason, and resolved to carry my pretended scheme as far as it would go, and even to execute it in reality, if I could not recede without injustice. After some time, however, I began to be more uneasy on account of St. Preux, as he did not appear to act the part he had undertaken with that zeal I expected. Indeed he opposed my professed design of marriage, but took little pains to check my growing inclination ; speaking to me of Laura in such a strain of encomium as, at the same time that he appeared to dissuade me from marrying her, added fuel to the flame by increasing my affection. This inconsistency gave me some alarm ; I did not think him so steady as before. He seemed shy of directly opposing my sentiments, gave way to my arguments, was fearful of giving offence, and indeed seemed to have lost all that intrepidity in doing his duty, which the true passion for it inspires. Some other observations which I made also, increased my distrust. I found out that he visited Laura unknown to me ; and that, by their frequent signs, there was a secret understanding between them. On her part, the prospect of being united to the man she loved, seemed to give her no pleasure ; I observed in her the same degree of tenderness indeed, but that tenderness was no longer mixed with joy at my

approach ; a gloomy sadness perpetually clouding her features. Nay, sometimes in the tenderest part of our conversations, I have caught her casting a side glance on St. Preux ; on which a tear would often steal silently down her cheek, which she endeavoured to conceal from me. In short, they carried the matter so far, that I was at last greatly perplexed. What could I think ? It is impossible, said I to myself, that I can all this while have been cherishing a serpent in my bosom ? How far have I not reason to extend my suspicions, and return those he formerly entertained of me ? Weak and unhappy as we are, our misfortunes are generally of our own seeking ! why do we complain that bad men torment us, while the good are so ingenious at tormenting each other ! All this operated but to induce me to come to a determination. For, though I was ignorant of the bottom of their intrigue, I saw the heart of Laura was still the same ; and that proof of her affection endeared her to me the more. I proposed to come to an explanation with her before I put an end to the affair ; but I was desirous of putting it off till the last moment, in order to get all the light I could possibly before-hand. As for St. Preux, I was resolved to convince myself, to convince him, and in short to come at the truth of the matter before I took any step in regard to him ; for it was easy to suppose that an infallible rupture must happen, and I was unwilling to place a good disposition and a reputation of twenty years standing, in the balance against mere suspicions.

The

The Marchioness was not ignorant of what passed; having her spies in the convent where Laura resides, who informed her of the report of her marriage. Nothing more was necessary to excite her rage. She wrote me threatening letters; nay, she went farther; but, as it was not the first time she had done so, and we were on our guard, her attempts were fruitless. I had only the pleasure to see that our friend did not spare himself on this occasion; nor make any scruple to expose his own life to save that of his friend.

Overcome by the transports of her passion, the Marchioness fell sick, and was soon past recovery; putting at once an end to her misfortunes and her guilt*. I could not help being afflicted to hear of her illness, and sent doctor Eswin to give her all the assistance in his power, as a physician. St. Preux went also to visit her in my behalf; but she would neither see one nor the other. She would not even bear to hear me named during her illness, and inveighed against me with the most horrid imprecations every time I was mentioned. I was grieved at heart for her situation, and felt my wounds ready to bleed afresh; reason however supported my spirits and resolution, but I should have been one of the worst of men to think of marriage, while a woman, so dear to me, lay in that extremity. In the mean time our friend, fearing I should not be able to resist the strong in-

* By a letter not published in this collection, it appears that Lord B—— was of opinion, that the souls of the wicked are annihilated in death.

clination I had to see her, proposed a journey to Naples ; to which I consented.

The second day after our arrival there, he came into my chamber with a fixed and grave countenance, holding a letter in his hand, which he seemed to have just received. I started up, and cried out, The Marchioness is dead ! Would to God, said he coldly, she were ! it were better not to exist, than to exist only to do evil ; but it is not of her I bring you news ; tho' what I bring concerns you nearly ; be pleased, my Lord, to give me an uninterrupted hearing. I was silent, and thus he began.

In honouring me with the sacred name of friend, you taught me how to deserve it. I have acquitted myself of the charge you intrusted with me, and seeing you ready to forget yourself, have ventured to assist your memory. I saw you unable to break one connection but by entering into another ; both equally unworthy of you. Had an unequal marriage been the only point in question, I should only have reminded you, that you was a peer of England, and advised you either to renounce all pretensions to public honour, or to respect public opinion. But a marriage so scandalous ! can you ? no, my Lord, you will not make so unworthy a choice. It is not enough that your wife should be virtuous, her reputation should be unstained. — Believe me, a wife for Lord B — is not easily to be found. Read that, my Lord, and see what I have done.

He then gave me a letter. It was from Laura. I opened it with emotion, and read as follows.

“ My Lord,

“ Love at length prevailed, and you were willing to marry me: but I am content. Your friend has pointed out my duty, and I perform it without regret: In dishonouring you, I should have lived unhappily; in leaving your honour unstained, methinks I partake of it. The sacrifice of my felicity to a duty so severe, makes me forget even the shame of my youth. Farewell! from this moment I am no longer in your power or my own. Farewell, my Lord, for ever! pursue me not in my retreat to despair; but hear my last request: Confer not on any other woman that honour I could not accept. There was but one heart in the world made for yours, and it was that of

Laura.”

The agitation of mind I was in, on reading this letter, prevented me from speaking. He took the advantage of my silence, to tell me that after my departure, she had taken the veil in the convent where she boarded; that the court of Rome being informed she was going to be married to a Lutheran, had given orders to prevent his seeing her; and confessed to me frankly, that he had taken all these measures in concert with herself. I did not oppose your designs, continued he, with all the power I might; fearing your return to the Marchioness, and being desirous of combating your old passion by that which you entertained for Laura. In seeing you run greater lengths than I intended, I applied

to your understanding: but having from my own experience but too just reason to distrust the power of argument, I founded the heart of Laura; and finding in it all that generosity which is inseparable from true love, I prevailed on her to make this sacrifice. The assurance of being no longer the object of your contempt, inspired her with a fortitude which renders her the more worthy of your esteem. She has done her duty, you must now do yours.

Then eagerly embracing and pressing me to his heart, 'I read, says he, in our common destiny, those laws which heaven dictates to both, and requires us to obey. The empire of love is at an end, and that of friendship begins: my heart attends only to its sacred call, it knows no other tie than that which unites me to you. Fix on whatever place of residence you please, Clarens, Oxford, London, Paris, or Rome; it is equal to me, so we but live together. Go whither you will, seek an asylum wherever you think fit, I will follow you throughout the world: for I solemnly protest, in the face of the living God, that I will never leave you till death.'

I was greatly affected at the zeal and affection of this young man; his eyes sparkling with pleasure on this effusion of his heart. I forgot at once both the Marchioness and Laura. Is there indeed any thing in the world to be regretted, while one preserves so dear a friend? Indeed, I was now fully convinced, by the part he so readily took on this occasion, that he was entirely cured of his ancient passion; and that the pains you had taken, were not thrown away upon

upon him. In short, I could not doubt, by the solemn engagement he had thus voluntarily made, that his attachment to me was truly sincere; and that his virtue had entirely got the better of his inclinations. I can therefore bring him back with confidence. Yes, my dear Wolmar, he is worthy to educate youth; and what is more, of being received into your house.

A few days after, I received an account of the death of the Marchioness; at which I was but little affected, as she had indeed been long dead in respect to me. I had hitherto regarded marriage as a debt, which every man contracts at the time of his birth, with his country and mankind; for which reason, I had resolved to marry, the less out of inclination than duty; but I am now of another opinion. The obligation to marriage, I now conceive, is not so universal, but that it depends on the rank and situation which every man holds in life. Celibacy is, doubtless, wrong in the common people, such as manufacturers, husbandmen, and others, who are really useful and necessary to the state. But for those superior orders of men, who compose the legislature and the magistracy, to which every other aspires, and which are always sufficiently supplied, it is both lawful and expedient. For were the rich all obliged to marry, the increase of number among those subjects which are a dead weight on the state, would only tend to its depopulation. Mankind will always find masters enough, and England will sooner want labourers than peers.

I think myself at full liberty, therefore, in the rank to which I was born, to indulge my own
inclina-

inclination in this respect. At my age, it is too late to think of repairing the shocks my heart hath sustained from love. I shall devote my future hours therefore to friendship, the pleasures of which I can no where cultivate so well as at Clarens. I accept, therefore, your obliging offers, on such conditions, as my fortune ought to add to yours, that it may not be useless to me. Besides, after the engagements St. Preux hath entered into, I know no other method of detaining him with you, but by residing with you myself; and if ever he grows tired or troublesome, it will be sufficient for me to leave you, to make him follow. The only embarrassment I shall in this case lie under, respects my customary voyages to England; for tho' I have no longer any interest in the house of peers, yet while I am one of the number, I think it necessary I should continue to do my duty as such. But I have a faithful friend among my brother-peers, whom I can empower to answer for me in ordinary cases; and on extraordinary occasions, wherein I think it my duty to go over in person, I can take my pupil along with me; and even he, his pupils with him, when they grow a little bigger, and you can prevail on yourself to trust them with us. Such voyages cannot fail of being useful to them, and will not be so very long as to make their absence afflicting to their mother.

I have not shewn this letter to St. Preux, nor do I desire you should shew every part of it to the ladies: it is proper that my scheme to sound the heart of our friend, should be known only to you and me. I would not have you conceal any thing from them, however, that may do honour

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honour to this worthy youth, even tho' it should be discovered at my expence: but I must here take my leave.

I have sent the designs and drawings for my pavilion, for you to reform, alter, and amend, as you please; but I would have you to execute them immediately, if possible. I would have struck out the music room; for I have now lost almost all pretensions to taste, and am careless of amusement: at the request of St. Preux, however, I have left it, as he proposes now and then to exercise your children there. You will receive also some few books, to add to your library. But what novelty will you find in books? No, my dear Wolmar, you only want to understand that of nature, to be the wisest of men.

L E T T E R CLIV.

Answer.

I Was impatient, my dear B——, to come to the end of your adventures. It seemed very strange to me, that, after having so long resisted the force of your inclinations, you had waited only for a friend to assist you to give way to them: tho' to say truth, we find ourselves often more weak when supported by others, than when we rely solely on our own strength. I confess, however, I was greatly alarmed by your last letter, when you told me your marriage with Laura was a thing absolutely determined. Not but that, in spite of this assurance, I still entertained some doubts of the event; and if my suspicions

suspensions had been disappointed, I would never have seen St. Preux again. As it is, you have both acted as I flattered myself you would, and have so fully justified the good opinion I had of you, that I shall be delighted whenever you think proper to return, and settle here agreeable to the design we had planned. Come, ye uncommon friends ! come to increase and partake of the happiness we here enjoy. However flattering may be the hopes of those who believe in a future state, for my part, I had rather enjoy the present in their company ; nay, I perceive you are both more agreeable to me with the tenets you possess, than you would be if unhappy enough to think as I do.

As to St. Preux, you know what were my sentiments of him at your departure ; there was no need to make any experiment on his heart to settle my judgment concerning him. My proof had been before made, and I thought I knew him as well as it was possible for one man to know another. I had, besides, more than one reason to place a confidence in him ; and was more secure of him than he was of himself. For tho' he seems to have followed your example in renouncing matrimony, you will perhaps find reason here to prevail on him to change his system. But I will explain myself farther on this head when I see you.

With respect to yourself, I think your sentiments on celibacy quite new and refined. They may, for aught I know, be judicious also, when applied to political institutions, intended to balance and keep in æquilibrium the relative powers of states ; but I am in doubt, whether they are

not

not more subtle than solid, when applied to dispense with the obligations that individuals lie under to the laws of nature. It seems to me that life is a blessing we receive on condition of transmitting it to our successors; a kind of tenure which ought to pass from generation to generation; and that every one who had a father, is indispensably obliged to become one. Such has been hitherto your opinion also; it was one of your motives for going to Italy: but I know from whence you derive your new system of philosophy; there is an argument in Laura's letter, which your heart knows not how to invalidate.

Our sprightly cousin has been for these eight or ten days past at Geneva, with her relations, on family affairs: but we daily expect her to return. I have told my wife as much as was expedient she should know of your letter. We had learnt of Mr. Miol, that your marriage was broken off; but she was ignorant of the part St. Preux had in that event: and you may be assured it will give her great pleasure to be informed of all he has done to merit your beneficence, and justify your esteem. I have shewn her the plan and designs for your pavilion, in which she thinks there is much taste. We propose to make some little alterations, however, as the ground requires; which, as they will make your lodging the more convenient, we doubt not you will approve.

We wait, nevertheless, for the sanction of Clara, before we resolve; for, without her, you know there is nothing to be done here. In the mean time I have set the people to work, and
hope

hope to have the masonry pretty forward before winter.

I am obliged to you for your books ; but I no longer read those I am master of, and it is too late in life for me to begin to study those I do not understand. I am, however, not quite so ignorant as you would make me. The only volume of nature's works which I read, is the heart of man ; of my abilities for comprehending which, my friendship for you is a sufficient proof.

LETTER CLV.

Mrs. ORBE to Mrs. WOLMAR.

MY stay here, my dear cousin, gives me a world of anxieties ; the worst of all which is, that the agreeableness of the place would induce me to stay longer. The city is delightful, its inhabitants hospitable, and their manners courteous ; while liberty, which I love of all things, seems to have taken refuge amongst them. The more I know of this little state, the more I find an attachment to one's country agreeable ; and pity those who, pretending to call themselves of this or that country, have no attachment to any. For my part, I perceive that, if I had been born in this, I should have had truly a Roman soul. As it is, I dare not, however, pretend to say that

Rome is no more at Rome, but where I dwell.

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For I am afraid you will be malicious enough, to think the contrary. But why need we talk always about Rome, and Rome? the subject of this letter shall be Geneva. I shall say nothing about the face of the country, it is much like ours, except that it is less mountainous, and more rural. I shall also say nothing about the government: my good father will, doubtless, give you enough of it; as he is employed here all day long, in the fulness of his heart, talking politics with the magistrates; and I find him not a little mortified that the Gazette so seldom makes mention of Geneva. You may judge of the tediousness of their conversation, by the length of my letters; for, when I am wearied with their discourse, I leave them, and, in order to divert myself, am tiresome to you. All I remember of their long conferences is, that they hold in high esteem the great good sense which prevails in this city. When we regard indeed the mutual action and re-action of all parts of the state, which afford a reciprocal balance to each other, it is not to be doubted that there are greater abilities employed in the government of this little republic than in that of some great kingdoms, where every thing supports itself by its own proper strength; and the reins of administration may be thrown into the hands of a blockhead, without any danger to the constitution. I can assure you, this is not the case here. I never hear any body talk to my father about the famous ministers of great courts, without thinking of the wretched musician who thundered away upon our great organ at Lausanne, and thought himself a prodigious able

able hand because he made a great noise. The people here have only a little spinnet, but in general they make good harmony, though the instrument be now and then a little out of tune.

Neither shall I say any thing about—but with telling you what I shall not say, I shall never have done. To begin then with something, that I may sooner come to a conclusion: Of all people in the world those of Geneva are the most easily known and characterised. Their manners, and even their vices, are mixed with a certain frankness peculiar to themselves. They are conscious of their natural goodness of heart, and that makes them not afraid to appear such as they are. They have generosity, sense, and penetration; but they are apt to love money too well; a fault which I attribute to their situation and circumstances, which make it so necessary; the territory of this state not producing a sufficient nourishment for its inhabitants. Hence it happens that the natives of Geneva, who are scattered up and down Europe to make their fortunes, copy the airs of foreigners; and, having adopted the vices of the countries where they have lived, bring them home in triumph with their wealth†. Thus the luxury of other nations makes them despise the simplicity of their own; its spirit and liberty appear ignoble, and they forge themselves chains of gold, not as marks of slavery, but as ornaments of pride.

† At present they do not take the trouble to seek the vices of foreigners: the latter are ready enough to bring them.

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But what have I to do with these confounded politics? indeed here I am stunned with them, and have them constantly rung in my ears. I hear nothing else talked of; unless when my father is absent, which never happens except when the post arrives. It is ourselves, my dear, nevertheless, that infect every place we go to; for, as to the conversation of the people, it is generally useful and agreeable; indeed there is little to be learned even from books, which may not here be acquired by conversation. The manners of the English have reached as far as this country; and the men, living more separate from the women than in ours, contract among themselves a graver turn, and have more solidity in their discourse. This advantage is attended, nevertheless, with an inconvenience that is very soon experienced. They are extremely prolix, formal, sententious, and argumentative. Instead of writing like Frenchmen, as they speak, they, on the contrary, speak as they write. They declaim instead of talking; and one thinks they are always going to support a Thesis. They divide their discourse into chapters and sections, and take the same method in their conversation as they do in their books. They speak as if they were reading, strictly observing etymological distinctions, and pronouncing their words exactly as they are spelt: in short, their conversations consist of harangues, and they prattle as if they were preaching.

But what is the most singular is, that, with this dogmatical and frigid air in their discourse, they are lively, impetuous, and betray strong passions; nay, they would express themselves well enough upon

upon sentimental subjects, if they were not too particular in words, or knew how to address the heart. But their periods and their commas are insupportable; and they describe so composedly the most violent passions, that, when they have done, one looks about one to see who is affected.

In the mean time, I must confess I am bribed a little to think well of their hearts, and to believe they are not altogether void of taste. For you must know, as a secret, that a very pretty gentleman for a husband, and, as they say, very rich, hath honoured me with his regards; and I have more gratitude and politeness than to call in question what he has told me. Had he but come eighteen months sooner, what pleasure should I have taken in having a sovereign for my slave, and in turning the head of a noble Lord! but at present, mine is not clear enough to make that sport agreeable.

But to return to that taste for reading which makes the people of Geneva think. It extends to all ranks and degrees amongst them, and is of advantage to all. The French read a great deal; but they read only new books; or rather they run them over, less for the sake of knowing what they contain, than to have it to say they have read them. On the contrary, the readers at Geneva peruse only books of merit; they read, and digest what they read; making it their business to understand, not to criticise upon them. Criticisms and the choice of books are made at Paris; while choice books are almost the only ones that are read at Geneva. By this means, their reading has less variety and is more profitable.

profitable. The women, on their part, employ a good deal of their time also in reading †; and their conversation is affected by it, but in a different manner. The fine ladies are affected and set up for wits here, as well as with us. Nay, the petty citizens themselves learn from their books a kind of methodical chit-chat, a choice of words which one is surpris'd to hear from them, as we are sometimes with the prattle of forward children. They must unite all the good sense of the men, all the sprightliness of the women, and all the wit common to both; or the former will appear a little pedantic, and the latter prudish.

As I was looking out of my window yesterday, I overheard two tradesmens daughters, both very pretty, talking together in a manner sprightly enough to attract my attention. I listened, and heard one of them propose to the other, laughing, to write a journal of their transactions. "Yes, replied the other immediately, a journal of a morning and a comment at night." What say you, cousin? I know not if this be the stile of tradesmens daughters; but I know one must be taken up greatly indeed, not to be able, during the whole day, to make more than a comment on what has pass'd. I fancy this lass had read the Arabian Nights Entertainments.

Thus with a stile a little elevated, the women of Geneva are lively and satyrical; and one sees here the effect of the nobler passions, as much as

† It is to be remembered that these letters were written some years ago; a circumstance, I am afraid, that will be often suggested to the reader.

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in any city in the world. Even in the simplicity of their dress there is taste ; they are graceful also in their manners, and agreeable in conversation. As the men are less gallant than affectionate, the women are less coquettish than tender ; their susceptibility gives, even to the most virtuous among them, an agreeable and refined turn, which reaches the heart, and thence deduces all its refinement. So long as the ladies of Geneva preserve their own manners, they will be the most amiable women in Europe ; but they are in danger of being soon all frenchified, and then Frenchwomen will be more agreeable than they.

Thus every thing goes to ruin, when manners grow corrupted. Even taste depends on morals, and disappears with them ; giving way to affected and pompous pretensions, that have no other foundation than fashion. True wit also lies nearly under the same circumstances. It is not the modesty of our sex that obliges us to make use of address to resist the arts of men : and, if they are reduced to make use of artifice to excite our attention, have we less occasion for ingenuity to seem not to understand them ? is it not the men who set our tongues and wits at liberty ; who make us so keen at repartee, and oblige us to turn their persons and pretensions into ridicule ? you may say what you will, but I maintain it that a certain coquettish air and malicious raillery confounds a gallant much more than silence or contempt. What pleasure have I not taken in seeing a discontented Celadon blush, stammer and lose himself at every word ; while the shafts of ridicule, less flaming but more pointed than those

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those of love, flew about him like hail ; in seeing him shot through and through with icicles, whose coldness added to the smart of the wounds ! even you yourself, who never loved to give pain, do you believe your mild and ingenuous behaviour, your timid, gentle looks conceal less roguery and art than my hoydening ? Upon my word, my dear, I much doubt, with all your hypocritical airs, if an account were taken of all the lovers you and I have made fools of, whether yours would not be the longer list. I cannot help laughing every time I think of that poor Conflans, who came to me in such a passion to reproach you with having too great a regard for him. She is so obliging to me, says he, that I know not what to complain of, and declines my pretensions with so much good sense, that I am ashamed of finding myself so unable to reply to her arguments ; in short, she is so much my friend, that I find myself incapable of supporting the character of her lover.

But to return to my subject. I believe there is no place in the world where married people agree better, and are better managers, than in this city : here a domestic life is peaceful and agreeable ; the husbands are in general obliging, and the wives almost Eloisa's. Here your system really exists. The two sexes employ and amuse themselves so differently, that they are never tired with each other's customs and company, but meet again with redoubled pleasure. This heightens the enjoyment of the wife ; abstinence from what we delight in, is a tenet of your philosophy ; it is indeed the epicurism of reason.

But, unhappily, this ancient modesty begins a little to decline. The sexes begin to associate more frequently, they approach in person and their hearts recede. It is here as with us, every thing is a mixture of good and bad, but in different proportions. The virtues of the natives of this country are of its own production; their vices are exotic. They are great travellers, and easily adopt the customs and manners of other nations; they speak other languages with facility, and learn without difficulty their proper accent, nevertheless they have a disagreeable drawling tone in the pronunciation of their own; particularly among the women, who travel but little. More humbled by their insignificance, than proud of their liberty, they seem among foreigners to be ashamed of their country, and are therefore in a hurry, as one may say, to naturalise themselves in that where they happen to reside; and perhaps the character they have of being avaricious and selfish, contributes not a little to this false shame. It would be better, without doubt, to wipe off the stain by a disinterested example, than to scandalise their fellow citizens by being ashamed of their country. But they despise the place of their nativity, even while they render it estimable; and are still more in the wrong not to give their city the honour of their own personal merit.

And yet, however avaricious they may be, they are not accused of amassing fortunes by low and servile means: they seldom attach themselves to the great, or dance attendance at courts; personal slavery being as odious to them as that of the community. Pliant and flexible

as Alcibiades, they are equally impatient of servitude ; and, though they adopt the customs of other nations, they imitate the people without being slaves to the prince. They are chiefly employed in trade, because that is the surest road to wealth, consistent with liberty.

And this great object of their wishes makes them often bury the talents with which they are prodigally endowed by nature. This brings me back to the beginning of my letter. They have ingenuity and courage, are lively and penetrating, nor is there any thing virtuous or great which surpasses their comprehension and abilities. But, more passionately fond of money than of honour, in order to live in abundance they die in obscurity, and the only example they leave to their children, is the love of those treasures which for their sakes they have amassed.

I learn all this from the natives themselves ; for they speak of their own characters very impartially.

For my part, I know not what they may be abroad, but at home they are an agreeable people : and I know but one way to quit Geneva without regret. Do you know, cousin, what this is ? you may affect as much ignorance and humility as you please ; if you should say you have not already guessed, you certainly would tell a fib. The day after to-morrow our jovial company will embark in a pretty little ship, fitted out for the occasion : for we chuse to return by water on account of the pleasantness of the season, and that we may be all together. We purpose to pass the first night at Morges, to be the next day at Laufanne, on account of the

marriage ceremony, and the day following to be at — you know where. When you see at a distance the flags flying, the torches flaming, and hear the cannon roar; I charge you skud about the house like a mad thing, and call the whole family to arms! to arms! the enemy! the enemy is coming!

P. S. Although the distribution of the apartments incontestibly belongs to me as house-keeper, I will give it up to you on this occasion; insisting only that my father be placed in those of Lord B—— on account of his charts and maps; with which I desire it may be compleatly hung from the cieling to the floor.

LETTER CLVI.

From Mrs. WOLMAR.

HOW delightful are my sensations in beginning this letter! it is the first time in my life that I ever wrote to you without fear or shame! I am proud of the friendship which now subsists between us, as it is the fruit of an unparalleled conquest over a fatal passion: a passion which may sometimes be overcome, but is very rarely refined into friendship. To relinquish that which was once dear to us when honour requires it, may be effected by the efforts of ordinary minds; but to have been what we once were to each other, and to become what

what we now are, this is a triumph indeed. The motive for ceasing to love may possibly be a vicious one ; but that which converts the most tender passion into as sincere a friendship cannot be equivocal : it must be virtuous. But should we ever have arrived at this of ourselves ? never, never, my good friend ; it had been rashness to attempt it. To avoid each other was the first article of our duty, and which nothing should have prevented us from performing. We might without doubt have continued our mutual esteem ; but we must have ceased to write, or to converse. All thoughts of each other must have been suppressed, and the greatest regard we could have reciprocally shewn, had been to break off all correspondence.

Instead of that, let us consider our present situation ; can there be on earth a more agreeable one, and do we not reap a thousand times a day the reward of our self-denial ? to see, to love each other, to be sensible of our bliss, to pass our days together in fraternal intimacy and peaceful innocence ; to think of each other without remorse, to speak without blushing ; to do honour to that attachment for which we have been so often reproached ;—this is the point at which we are at last arrived. O my friend ! how far in the career of honour have we already run ! let us resolve to persevere, and finish our race as we have begun.

To whom are we indebted for such extraordinary happiness ? you cannot be ignorant : you know it well. I have seen your susceptible heart overflow with gratitude at the goodness of the best of men, to whom both you and I

have been so greatly obliged : a goodness that does not lay us under fresh obligations, but only renders those more dear which were before sacred. The only way to acknowledge his favours is to merit them ; for the only value he sets on them consists in their emolument to us. Let us then reward our benefactor by our virtue ; for this is all he requires, and therefore all we owe him. He will be satisfied with us and with himself, in having restored us to our reason.

But permit me to lay before you a picture of your future situation, that you may yourself examine it, and see if there be any thing in it to make you apprehensive of danger : Yes, worthy youth, if you respect the cause of virtue, attend with a chaste ear to the counsels of your friend. I tremble to enter upon a subject in which I am sorry to engage ; but how shall I be silent without betraying my friend ? will it not be too late to warn you of the danger when you are already entangled in the snare ? Yes, my friend, I am the only person in the world who is intimate enough with you to present it to your view. Have I not a right to talk to you as a sister, as a mother ?

Your career, you tell me, is finished ; if so, its end is premature. Though your first passion be extinguished, your sensibility still remains ; and your heart is the more to be suspected, as its only cause of restraint no longer exists. A young man of great ardour and susceptibility resolves to live continent and chaste ; he knows, he feels, he has a thousand times said, that fortitude of mind which is productive of every virtue, depends on the purity of sentiment

ment which supports it. As love preserved him from vice in his youth, his good sense must secure him in manhood ; however severe may be the duty enjoined him, he knows there is a pleasure arising from it, that will compensate its rigour ; and, though it be necessary to enter the conflict when conquest is in view, can he do less now out of piety to God than he did before out of regard to a mistress ? such I imagine is your way of reasoning, and such the maxims you adopt for your future conduct : for you have always despised those persons who, content with outward appearances, have one doctrine for theory and another for practice, and who lay upon others a burden of moral duties which they themselves are unwilling to bear.

But what kind of life has such a prudent, virtuous man made choice of, in order to comply with those rules he has prescribed ? less a philosopher than a man of probity and a christian, he has not surely taken his vanity for a guide : he certainly knows that it is much easier to avoid temptations, than to withstand them ; does he therefore avoid all dangerous opportunities ? does he shun those objects which are most likely to move his passions ? has he that humble diffidence of himself which is the best security to virtue ? Quite the contrary ; he does not hesitate rashly to rush on danger. At thirty years of age, he is going to seclude himself from the world, in company with women of his own age ; one of which was once too dear to him for him ever to banish the dangerous idea of their former intimacy from his mind ; another of whom has lived with him in great

familiarity, and a third is attached to him by all those ties which obligations conferred excite in grateful minds. He is going to expose himself to every thing that can renew those passions which are but imperfectly extinguished; he is going to entangle himself in those snares which he ought, of all others, to avoid. There is not one circumstance attending his situation which ought not to make him distrust his own strength, nor one which will not render him for ever contemptible, should he be weak enough to be off his guard for a moment. Where then is that great fortitude of mind, in which he presumes to place such confidence? in what instance has it hitherto appeared that he can be answerable for it, for the future? did he acquire it at Paris, in the house of the colonel's lady? or was he influenced by it last summer at Meillerie? has it been his security during the winter, against the charms of another object, or this spring against the terrifying apprehensions of a dream? by the slender assistance it once afforded him, is there any reason to suppose it will always bring him off victorious? he may know, when his duty requires, how to combat the passions of a friend; but will he be as capable of combating his own? Alas! let him learn from the best half of his life to think modestly of the other.

A state of violence and constraint may be supported for a while. Six months, for instance, a year, is nothing; fix any certain time and we may presume to hold out. But when that state is to last as long as we live, where is the fortitude that can support itself under it? Who can
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sustain a constant state of self-denial? O my friend! a life of pleasure is short, but a life of virtue is exceeding long. We must be incessantly on our guard. The instant of enjoyment is soon passed, and never more returns; that of doing evil passes away too; but as constantly returns, and is ever present. Forget ourselves for a moment, and we are undone! is it in such a state of danger and trial, that our days can pass away in happiness and tranquillity? or is it for such as have once escaped the danger to expose themselves again to like hazards? what future occasions may not arise as hazardous as those you have escaped, and what is worse, equally unforeseen? do you think the monuments of danger exist only at Meillerie? they are in every place where we are; we carry them about with us: yes, you know too well that a susceptible mind interests the whole universe in its passion, and that every object here will excite our former ideas, and remind us of our former sensations.

I believe, however, I am presumptuous enough to believe, that will never happen to me; and my heart is ready enough to answer for yours. But, though it may be above meanness, is that easy heart of yours above weakness? and am I the only person here it will cost you pains to *respect*? forget not, St. Preux, that all who are dear to me are intitled to be respected as myself; reflect that you are continually to bear the innocent play of an amiable woman; think of the eternal disgrace you will deservedly fall into, if your heart should go astray for a moment, and

you should harbour any designs on her you have so much reason to honour.

I would have your duty, your word, and your ancient friendship restrain you; the obstacles which virtue throws in your way may serve to discourage idle hopes; and, by the help of your reason, you may suppress your fruitless wishes; but would you thence be freed from the influence of sense and the snares of imagination? obliged to respect us both and to forget our sex, you will be liable to temptation from our servants, and might perhaps think yourself justified by the condescension: but would you be in reality less culpable? or can the difference of rank change the nature of a crime? on the contrary, you would debase yourself the more, as the means you might employ would be more ignoble. But is it possible that you should be guilty of such means! no, perish the base man, who would bargain for an heart, and make love a mercenary passion! such men are the cause of all the crimes which are committed by debauchery: for she who is once bought will be ever after to be sold: and amidst the shame into which she is inevitably plunged, who may most properly be said to be the author of her misery, the brutal wretch who insults her in a brothel, or her seducer who shewed her the way thither, by first paying a price for her favours?

I will add another consideration which, if I am not mistaken, will affect you. You have been witness of the pains I have taken to establish order and decency in my family. Tranquillity and modesty, happiness and innocence prevail throughout the whole. Think, my friend,

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friend, of yourself, of me, of what we were, of what we are, and what we ought to be. Shall I have it one day to say, in regretting my-lost labour, It is to you I owe the disorder of my house?

Let us, if it be necessary, go farther, and sacrifice even modesty to a true regard for virtue. Man is not made for a life of celibacy, and it is very difficult in a state so contrary to that of nature, not to fall into some public or private irregularity. For how shall a man be always on his guard against an intestine enemy? Look upon the rash votaries of other countries, who enter into a solemn vow, not to be men. To punish them for their presumption, heaven abandons them to their own weakness: they call themselves faints, for entering into engagements which necessarily make them sinners; their continence is only pretended, and, for affecting to set themselves above the duties of humanity, they debase themselves below it. It is easy to stand upon punctilio, and affect a nice observance of laws which are kept only in appearance †; but a truly virtuous man cannot but perceive that his

† Some men are continent without having any merit in it, others are so through virtue, and I doubt not there are many Romish priests in the latter situation: but to impose a state of celibacy, on so numerous a body of men as the clergy of that church, it is not to bid them abstain from women, but to be content with the wives of other men. I am really surpris'd that in countries where morals are held in any esteem, the legislature should tolerate such scandalous engagements.

essential duties are sufficient without extending them to works of supererogation.

It is, my dear St. Preux, the true humility of a christian, always to think his duty too much for his strength ; apply this rule, and you will be sensible that a situation which might only alarm another man, ought to make you tremble. The less you are afraid, the more reason you have to fear, and if you are not in some degree deterred by the severity of your duty, you can have little hopes of being able to discharge it.

Such are the perils that threaten you here. I know that you will never deliberately venture to do ill ; and the only evils you have cause to apprehend are those which you cannot foresee. I do not however bid you draw your conclusions solely from my reasoning ; but recommend it to your mature consideration. If you can answer me in a manner satisfactory to yourself, I shall be satisfied ; if you can rely upon yourself, I too shall rely upon you. Tell me that you have overcome all the foibles of humanity, that you are an angel, and I will receive you with open arms.

But is it possible for you, whilst a man, to lead a life of continual self-denial and mortification ? to have almost the most severe duties to perform ? to be constantly on your guard with those whom you so sincerely love ? no, no, my amiable friend, happy is he who in this life can make one single sacrifice to virtue. I have one in view, worthy of a man who has struggled and suffered in its cause. If I do not presume too far, the happiness I have ventured to design
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for you, will repay every obligation of my heart, and be even greater than you would have enjoyed, had providence favoured our first inclinations. As I cannot make you an angel myself, I would unite you to one who would be the guardian of your heart, who will refine it, re-animate it to virtue, and under whose auspices you may securely live with us in this peaceful retreat of angelic innocence. You will not, I conceive, be under much difficulty to guess who it is I mean, as it is an object which has already got footing in the heart which it will one day entirely possess, if my project succeeds.

I foresee all the difficulties attending it, without being discouraged, as the design is virtuous. I know the influence I have over my fair friend, and think I shall not abuse it by exerting my power in your favour. But you are acquainted with her resolutions, and before I attempt to alter them, I ought to be well assured of your sentiments, that while I am endeavouring to prevail on her to permit your addresses, I may be able to answer for your love and gratitude: for, if the inequality which fortune has made between you deprives you of the privilege of making such a proposal yourself, it is still more improper that this privilege should be granted before we know how you will receive it. I am not unacquainted with your delicacy, and know that if you have any objections to make, they will respect her rather than yourself. But banish your idle scruples. Do you think you can be more tenacious of my friend's reputation than I am? no, however dear you are to me,

you need not be apprehensive lest I should prefer your interest to her honour. But as I value the esteem of people of sense, so I despise the prejudices and inconsiderate censures of the multitude, who are ever led by the false glare of things, and are strangers to real virtue. Were the difference in point of fortune between you a hundred times greater than it is, there is no rank in life to which great talents and good behaviour have not a right to aspire: and what pretensions can a woman have to disdain to make that man her husband, whom she is proud to number among her friends? You know the sentiments of us both in these matters. A false modesty and the fear of censure, lead to more bad actions than good ones; for virtue never blushes at any thing but vice.

As to yourself, that pride which I have sometime remarked in you cannot be exerted with greater impropriety than on this occasion; and it would be a kind of ingratitude in you to receive from her, reluctantly, one favour more. Besides, however nice and difficult you may be in this point, you must own it is more agreeable, and has a much better look, for a man to be indebted for his fortune to his wife than to a friend; as he becomes a protector of the one, and is protected by the other; and as nothing can be more true than that a virtuous man cannot have a better friend than his wife.

If after all, there remain in the bottom of your heart any repugnance to enter into new love engagements, you cannot too speedily suppress them, both for your own honour and my repose: for I shall never be satisfied with either

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you or myself till you really become what you ought to be, and take pleasure in what your duty requires. Ought not I, my friend, to be less apprehensive of such a repugnance to new engagements, than of inclinations too relative to the old? what have I not done with regard to you, to discharge my duty? I have even exceeded my promises. Do I not even give you an Eloisa? will you not possess the better half of myself, and be still dearer to the other? with what pleasure shall I not indulge myself, after such a connection, in my attachment to you! yes, accomplish to her those vows you made to me, and let your heart fulfil with her all our former engagements. May it, if possible, give to hers all it owes to mine. O St. Preux! to her I transfer that ancient debt. Remember it is not easily to be discharged.

Such, my friend, is the scheme I have projected to reunite you to us without danger; in giving you the same place in our family which you already hold in our hearts, attached by the most dear and sacred connections, we shall live together, sisters and brothers; you no longer your own enemy nor ours. The warmest sentiments when legitimate are not dangerous. When we are no longer under the necessity of suppressing them, they cannot excite our apprehensions. So far indeed from endeavouring to suppress sentiments so innocent and delightful, we should make them at once both our pleasure and our duty. We should then love each other with the purest affection, and should enjoy the united charms of friendship, love, and innocence. And, if in executing the charge you have taken upon

upon yourself, heaven should recompense the care you take of our children, by blessing you with children of your own, you will then know from experience how to estimate the service you have done us. Endowed with the greatest blessings of which human nature is capable, you will learn to support with pleasure the agreeable burthen of a life useful to your friends and relations; you will, in short, perceive to be true what the vain philosophy of the vicious could never believe; that happiness is even in this world the reward of the virtuous.

Reflect at leisure on my proposal; not however to determine whether it suits you; I require not your answer on that point; but whether it is proper for Mrs. Orbe, and whether you can make her as happy as she ought to make you. You know in what manner she has discharged her duty in every station of her sex. Judge by what she is, what she has a right to expect. She is as capable of love as Eloisa, and should be loved in the same degree. If you think you can deserve her, speak; my friendship will try to effect such an union, and from hers, flatters itself with success. But, if my hopes are deceived in you, you are at least a man of honour and probity, and are not unacquainted with her delicacy; you would not covet happiness at the expence of her felicity: let your heart be worthy of her, or let the offer of it never be made.

Once more, I say, consult your own heart; consider well of your answer before you send it. In matters relative to the happiness of one's whole life, common prudence will not permit

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us to determine without great deliberation : but, in an affair where our whole soul, our happiness both here and hereafter is at stake, even to deliberate lightly would be a crime. Call to your aid, therefore, my good friend, all the dictates of true wisdom ; nor will I be ashamed to put you in mind of those which are most essential. You don't want religion : I am afraid however, you do not draw from it all the advantage which your conduct might receive from its precepts : but that your philosophical pride elevates you above true christian simplicity : in particular, your notions of prayer are by no means consistent with mine. In your opinion, that act of humiliation is of no use to us. God having implanted in every man's conscience all that is necessary to direct him aright, has afterwards left him to himself, a free agent, to act as he pleases. But you well know this is not the doctrine of St. Paul, nor that which is professed in our church. We are free agents, it is true, but we are by nature ignorant, weak and prone to evil : of whom then shall we acquire strength and knowledge, but of the source of all power and wisdom ? and how shall we obtain them if we are not humble enough to ask ? Take care, my friend, that to the sublime ideas you entertain of the supreme Being, human pride doth not annex the abject notions, which belong only to man. Can you think the Deity wants such arts as are necessary to human understanding, or that he lies under the necessity of generalising his ideas to comprehend them the more readily ? according to your notions of things, providence would be under an embarrassment to take care of

of individuals. You seem to be afraid that a constant attention to a diversity of objects must perplex and fatigue infinite wisdom, and to think that it can act better by general than particular laws; doubtless because this seems easier for the Almighty. The Deity is highly obliged to such great philosophers for furnishing him with convenient means of action, to ease him of his labour. But why should we ask any thing of him? say you: is he not acquainted with our wants? is he not a father that provides for his children? do we know better than he what is needful for us, or are we more desirous of happiness than he is that we should be happy?

This, my dear St. Preux, is all sophistry. The greatest of our wants, even the only one we have no remedy for, is that of being insensible of them; and the first step to relief is the knowledge of our necessities. To be wise we must be humble; in the sensibility of our weakness we become strong. Thus justice is united to clemency; thus grace and liberty triumph together.

Slaves by our weakness, we are set free by prayer: for it depends on us to seek and obtain favour; but the power to do this, depends not on ourselves.

Learn then not always to depend on your own sagacity on difficult occasions; but on that Being whose omnipotence is equal to his wisdom, and who knows how to direct us in every thing right. The greatest defect in human wisdom, even in that which has only virtue for its object, is a too great confidence, which makes us judge by the present of the future, and of
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our whole lives from the experience of a single moment. We perceive ourselves resolute one instant, and therefore conclude we shall always be so. Puffed up with that pride, which is nevertheless mortified by daily experience, we think we are under no danger of falling into a snare which we have once escaped. The modest language of true fortitude is, *I had resolution, it is true, on this or that occasion*; but he who boasts of his present security knows not how weak he may prove on the next trial? and, relying on his borrowed strength as if it were his own, deserves to feel the want of it when he stands in most need of assistance. How vain are all our projects, how absurd our reasonings in the eyes of that Being, who is not confined to time or space! man is so weak as to disregard things which are placed at a distance from him: he sees only the objects which immediately surround him; changes his notions of things as the point of sight is changed from whence he views them. We judge of the future from what agrees with us now, without knowing how far that which pleases to-day may be disagreeable to-morrow: we depend on ourselves, as if we were always the same, and yet are changing every hour. Who can tell if they shall always desire what they now wish for? if they shall be to-morrow what they are to-day, if external objects and even a change in the constitution of the body may not vary the modification of their minds, and if we may not be made miserable by the very means we have concerted for our happiness! Shew me the fixed and certain rule of human wisdom, and I will take it
for

for my guide. But if the best lesson it can teach us is, to distrust our own strength, let us have recourse to that superior wisdom which cannot deceive us, and follow those dictates which cannot lead us astray. It is that wisdom I implore to enlighten my understanding to advise you ; do you implore the same to direct your resolutions? Whatever these be, I well know you will take no step which does not at present appear honourable and just ; but this is not enough, it is necessary you should take such as will be always so ; and of the means to do this neither you nor I are of ourselves competent judges.

LETTER CLVII.

Answer.

FROM Eloisa ! a letter from her after seven years silence ! yes, it is her writing.— I see, I feel it : can my eyes be a stranger to characters which my heart can never forget ? and do you still remember my name ? do you still know how to write it ? does not your hand tremble as your pen forms the letters ? Alas ! Eloisa ! whither have you hurried my wandering thoughts ? the form, the fold, the seal, the superscription of your letter call to my mind those very different epistles which love used to dictate. In this the heart and hand seem to be in opposition to each other. Ought the same hand-writ-
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ing to be employed in committing to paper sentiments so very different?

You will be apt to judge that my thinking so much of your former letters too evidently confirms what you have suggested in your last. But you are mistaken. I plainly perceive that I am changed, and that you are no longer the same; and what proves it to me the most is, that except your beauty and goodness, every thing I see in you now is a new subject of admiration. This remark may anticipate your assurance. I rely not on my own strength, but on the sentiment which makes it unnecessary. Inspired with every thing which I ought to honour in her whom I have ceased to adore, I know into what degree of respect my former homage ought to be converted. Penetrated with the most lively gratitude, it is true, I love you as much as ever; but I esteem and honour you most for the recovery of my reason.

Ever since the discerning and judicious Wolmar has discovered my real sentiments, I have acquired a better knowledge of myself, and am less alarmed at my weakness. Let it deceive my imagination as it will, the delusion will be still agreeable; it is sufficient that it can no longer offend you, and that my ideal errors serve in the end to preserve me from real danger.

Believe me, Eloisa, there are impressions, which neither time, circumstance, nor reason can efface. The wound may heal, but the scar will remain, an honourable mark that preserves the heart from any other wound. Love and inconstancy are incompatible; when a
lover

lover is fickle, he ceases to be a lover. For my part, I am no longer a lover; but, in ceasing to adore you as such, I remain under your protection. I am no longer apprehensive of danger from you, but then you prevent my apprehensions from others. No, respectable Eloisa, you shall never see in me any other than a friend to your person and a lover only of your virtues: but our love, our first, our matchless love shall never be rooted out of my heart. The remembrance of the flower of my age shall never be thus tarnished: for, were I to live whole centuries, those happy hours of my youth will never return, nor be banished from my memory. We may, it is true, be no longer the same; but I shall never forget what we have been.

Let us come now to your cousin. I cannot help confessing, my dear friend, that since I have no longer dared to contemplate your charms, I have become more sensible to hers. What eyes could be perpetually straying from beauty to beauty without fixing their admiration on either! mine have lately gazed on her's perhaps with too much pleasure; and I must own that her charms, before imprinted on my heart, have during my absence made a deeper impression. The sanctuary of my heart is shut up; but her image is in the temple. I gradually become to her what I might have been at first, had I never beheld you; and it was in your power only to make me sensible of the difference between what I feel for her and the love I had for you. My senses, released from that terrible passion, embrace the delightful sentiments of friendship. But must love be the re-

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sult of this union? Ah Eloisa! what difference! where is the enthusiasm? the adoration? where are those divine transports, those distractions, a hundred times more sublime, more delightful, more forcible than reason itself? a slight warmth, a momentary delirium, seize me, affect me a while and then vanish. In your cousin and me I see two friends who have a tender regard for each other and confess it. But have lovers a *regard* for each other? No, *you* and *I* are two words prohibited in the lover's language. Two lovers are not two persons, but one.

Is my heart then really at ease? how can it be so? she is charming, she is both your friend and mine: I am attached to her by gratitude, and think of her in the most delightful moments of reflection. How many obligations are hence conferred on a susceptible mind, and how is it possible to separate the tenderest sentiments from those to which she has such an undoubted right! Alas! it is decreed that between you and her, my heart will never enjoy one peaceful moment!

O women, women! dear and fatal objects! whom nature has made beautiful for our torment, who punish us when we brave your power, who pursue when we dread your charms; whose love and hate are equally destructive; and whom we can neither approach nor fly with impunity! beauty, charm, sympathy! inconceivable Being, or chimera! source of pain and pleasure! beauty more terrible to mortals than the element to which the birth of your Goddess is ascribed! it is you who create those tempests which are so destructive to mankind. How
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dearly, Eloisa! how dearly, Clara! do I purchase your cruel friendship!

I have lived in a tempest, and it is you who have always raised it: but how different are the agitations which you separately excite! different as the waves of the lake of Geneva from those of the Atlantic ocean. The first are short and quick, and by their constant agitation are often fatal to the small barks that ride without making way on their surface: but on the ocean, calm and mild in appearance, we find ourselves mounted aloft, and softly borne forward to a vast distance on waves, whose motions are slow and almost imperceptible. We think we scarce move from the place, and arrive at the farthest parts of the earth.

Such is in fact the difference between the effects which your charms and hers have on my heart. That first unequalled passion, which determined the destiny of my life, and which nothing could conquer but itself, had its birth before I was sensible of its generation; it hurried me on before I knew where I was, and involved me in irrevocable ruin before I believed myself led astray. While the wind was fair, my labouring bark was every moment alternately soaring into the clouds, and plunging into the deep: but I am now becalmed, and know no longer where I am. On the contrary, I see, I feel too well how much her presence affects me, and conceive my danger greater than it really is. I experience some slight raptures, which are no sooner felt than gone. I am one moment transported with passion, and the next peaceful and calm: in vain is the vessel beaten about by the waves,

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waves, while there is no wind to fill its sails: my heart, contented with her real charms, does not exaggerate them: she appears more beautiful to my eyes than to my imagination; and I am more afraid of her when present than absent. Your charms have, on the contrary, had always a very different effect; but at Clarens I alternately experience both.

Since I left it, indeed, the image of our cousin presents itself sometimes more powerfully to my imagination. Unhappily, however, it never appears alone: it affects me not with love, but with disquietude.

These are in reality my sentiments with regard both to the one and the other. All the rest of your sex are nothing to me; the pangs I have so long suffered have banished them entirely from my remembrance;

E fornito 'l mio tempo a mezzo gli anni.

My days elaps'd ere half my years are gone.

Adversity has supplied the place of fortitude, to enable me to conquer nature and triumph over temptation. People in distress have few desires, you have taught me to vanquish by resisting them. An unhappy passion is an instrument of wisdom. My heart is become, if I may so express myself, the organ of all my wants; for when that is at ease I want nothing. Let not you or your cousin disturb its tranquillity, and it will for the future be always at rest.

In this situation, what have I to fear from myself? and by what cruel precaution would you rob me of happiness, in order to prevent my being exposed to lose it? how capricious is it

to have made me fight and conquer, to rob me afterwards of the reward of my victory? do you not condemn those who brave unnecessary danger? why then did you recall me at so great a hazard, to run so many risks? Or, why would you banish me when I am so worthy to remain? ought you to have permitted your husband to take the trouble he has done for nothing? why did you not prevent his taking the pains which you were determined to render fruitless? why did you not say to him, *Leave the poor wretch at the other end of the world, or I shall certainly transport him again?* alas! the more afraid you are of me, the sooner you ought to recall me home. It is not in your presence I am in danger, but in your absence; and I dread the power of your charms only where you are not. When the formidable Eloisa pursues me, I fly for refuge to Mrs. Wolmar, and I am secure. Whither shall I fly, if you deprive me of the asylum I find in her? all times and places are dangerous while she is absent; for in every place I find either Clara or Eloisa. In reflecting on the time past, in meditating on the present, the one and the other alternately agitate my heart, and thus my restless imagination becomes tranquil only in your presence, and it is with you only I find security against myself. How shall I explain to you the change I perceive in approaching you? you have always exerted the same sovereign power; but its effects are now different from what they were: in suppressing the transports you once inspired, your empire is more noble and sublime; a peaceful serenity has succeeded to the storm of the passions; my heart, modelled by yours, loves in the same manner,

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manner, and becomes tranquil by your example. But in this transitory repose I enjoy only a short truce with the passions; and, though I am exalted to the perfection of angels in your presence, I no sooner forsake you than I fall into my native meanness. Yes, Eloisa, I am apt sometimes to think I have two souls, and that the good one is deposited in your hands. Ah! why do you seek to separate me from it?

But you are fearful of the consequences of youthful desires, extinguished only by trouble and adversity. You are afraid for the young women who are in your house and under your protection. You are afraid of that which the prudent Wolmar was not afraid of. How mortifying to me are such apprehensions! do you then esteem your friend less than the meanest of your servants? I can, however, forgive your thinking ill of me; but never your not paying yourself that respect which is so justly your due. No, Eloisa, the flame with which I once burnt has purified my heart; and I am no longer actuated like other men. After what I have been, should I so debase myself though but for a moment, I would hide myself in the remotest corner of the earth, and should never think myself too far removed from Eloisa.

What! could I disturb that peaceful order and domestic tranquillity, in which I take so much pleasure? could I sully that sweet retreat of innocence and peace, wherein I have dwelt with so much honour? could I be so base as—no, the most debauched, the most abandoned, of men would be affected with so charming a picture. He could not fail of being enamoured

with virtue in this asylum. So far from carrying hither his licentious manners, he would betake himself thither to cast them off. Could I then, Eloisa, be capable of what you insinuate? and that under your own eyes? no, my dear friend, open your doors to me without scruple; your mansion is to me the temple of virtue; its sacred image strikes me in every part of it, and binds me to its service. I am not indeed an angel; but I shall dwell in the habitation of angels, and will imitate their example. Those who would not wish to resemble them, will never seek their company.

You see it is with difficulty I come to the chief object of your last letter; that which I should have first and most maturely considered, and which only should now engage my thoughts if I could pretend to the happiness proposed to me. O Eloisa, benevolent and incomparable friend! in offering me thus your other half, the most valuable present in the universe next to yourself, you do more for me if possible than ever you have done before. A blind ungovernable passion might have prevailed on you to give me yourself; but to give me your friend is the sincerest proof of your esteem. From this moment I begin to think myself, indeed, a man of real merit, since I am thus distinguished. But how cruel, at the same time, is this proof of it. In accepting your offer I should bely my heart, and to deserve must refuse it. You know me, and may judge.

It is not enough that your charming cousin should engage my affections; I know she should be loved as you are. But will it, can it be?

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or does it depend on me to do her that justice, in this particular, which is her due? alas! if you intended ever to unite me to her, why did you not leave me a heart to give her; a heart which she might have inspired with new sentiments, and which in turn might have offered her the first-fruits of love! I ought to have a heart at ease and at liberty, such as was that of the prudent and worthy Orbe, to love her only as he did. I ought to be as deserving as he was, in order to succeed him: otherwise the comparison between her former and present situation will only serve to render the latter less supportable; the cold and divided love of a second husband, so far from consoling her for the loss of the first, will but make her regret him the more. By her union with me, she will only convert a tender grateful friend into a common husband. What will she gain by such an exchange? she will be doubly a loser by it; her susceptible mind will severely feel its loss; and how shall I support a continual sadness, of which I am the cause, and which I cannot remove? In such a situation, alas! her grief would be first fatal to me. No, Eloisa, I can never be happy at the expence of her ease. I love her too well to marry her.

Be happy! no, can I be happy without making her so? can either of the parties be separately happy or miserable in marriage? are not their pleasures and pains, common to both? and does not the chagrin which one gives to the other always rebound on the person who caused it? I should be made miserable by her afflictions, without being made happy by her goodness.

Beauty, fortune, merit, love, all might conspire to ensure my felicity! but my heart, my froward heart, would counterwork them all; would poison the source of my delights, and make me miserable in the very midst of happiness.

In my present situation, I take pleasure in her company: but if I should attempt to augment that pleasure by a closer union, I shall deprive myself of the most agreeable moments of my life. Her turn for humour and gaiety may give an amorous cast to her friendship, but this is only whilst there are witnesses to her favours. I may also feel too lively an emotion for her; but it is only when by your presence you have banished every tender sentiment for Eloisa. When she and I are by ourselves, it is you only who render our conversation agreeable. The more our attachment increases, the more we think on the source from which it sprung; the ties of friendship are drawn closer, and we love each other but to talk of you. Hence arise a thousand pleasing reflections, pleasing to Clara and more so to me, all which a closer union would infallibly destroy. Will not such reflections, in that case too delightful, be a kind of infidelity to her? and with what face can I make a beloved and respectable wife the confidant of those infidelities of which my heart, in spite of me, would be guilty? This heart could no longer transfuse itself into hers. No longer daring to talk of you, I should soon forbear to speak at all. Honour and duty imposing on me a new reserve, would thus estrange me from the wife of my bosom, and I should have no longer a guide or

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a counsellor to direct my steps or correct my errors. Is this the homage she has a right to expect from me? is this that tribute of gratitude and tenderness which I ought to pay to her? is it thus that I am to make her and myself happy?

Is it possible that Eloisa can have forgotten our mutual vows? for my part, I never can forget them. I have lost all, except my sincerity, and that I will preserve inviolate to my last hour. As I could not live for you, I will die unmarried. Nay, had I not already made such a promise to myself, I would do it now. For though it be a duty to marry, it is yet a more indispensable one not to make any person unhappy; and all the sentiments such a contract would now excite in me, would be mixed with the constant regret of that which I once vainly hoped for: a regret which would at once be my torment, and that of her who should be unfortunate enough to be my wife. I should require of her those days of bliss which I expected with you. How should I support the comparison! what woman in the world could bear that? Ah, no, I could never endure the thoughts of being at once deprived of you, and destined to be the husband of another.

Seek not then, my dear friend, to shake those resolutions on which depends the repose of my life: seek not to recall me out of that state of annihilation into which I am fallen; lest, in bringing me back to a sense of my existence, my wounds should bleed afresh, and I should again sink under a load of misfortunes. Since my return I perceived how deeply I became

interested in whatever concerned your charming friend ; but I was not alarmed at it, as I knew the situation of my heart would never permit me to be too solicitous. Indeed I was not displeased with an emotion, which, while it added softness to the attachment I always had for Clara, would assist in diverting my thoughts from a more dangerous object, and enable me to support your presence with greater confidence. This emotion has something in it of the pleasure of love, without any of its pains. The calm delight I take in seeing her is not disturbed by the restless desire of possessing her : contented to pass my whole life in the manner I passed the last winter, I find between you both that peaceful and agreeable situation *, which tempers the austerity of virtue, and renders its lessons amiable. If a vain transport affects me for a moment, every thing conspires to suppress it ; and I have too effectually vanquished those infinitely more impetuous and dangerous emotions to fear any that can assail me now. I honour your friend no less than I love her, and that is saying every thing. But should I consult only my own interest, the rights of the tenderest friendship are too valuable, to risk their loss, by endeavouring to extend them : and I need not even think of the respect which is her due to

* This is a direct contradiction to what he asserted before. The poor philosopher seems to be in a droll dilemma between two pretty women. One might be apt to think he chose to make love to neither, that he might the better love them both.

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prevent my ever saying a single word in private conversation which would require interpretation, or which she ought not to understand. She may perhaps have sometimes remarked a little too much solicitude in my behaviour towards her ; but she has surely never observed in my heart any desire to express it. Such as I was for six months past, such would I be with regard to her as long as I live. I know none who approach you, so perfect as she is ; but were she even more perfect than yourself, I feel that after having been your lover I should never have become hers.

But before I conclude this letter, I must give you my opinion of yours. Yes, Eloisa, with all your prudence and virtue, I can discover in it the scruples of a timorous mind, which thinks it a duty to frighten itself ; and conceives its security lies in being afraid. This extreme timidity is as dangerous as excessive confidence. In constantly representing to us imaginary monsters, it wastes our strength of combating chimeras, and by terrifying us without cause, makes us less on our guard against, as well as less capable of discerning real dangers. Read over again, now and then, the letter which Lord B— wrote to you last year, on the subject of your husband ; you will find in it some good advice that may be of service to you in many respects. I do not discommend your devotion, it is affecting, amiable, and like yourself ; it is such as even your husband should be pleased with. But take care lest timidity and precaution lead you to quietism ; and lest by representing to yourself danger on every side, you are induced at length

to confide in nothing. Don't you know, my dear friend, that a state of virtue is a state of warfare? Let us employ our thoughts less on the dangers which threaten us, than on ourselves; that we may always be prepared to withstand temptation. If to run in the way of temptation is to deserve to fall, to shun it with too much sollicitude is often to fly from the opportunities of discharging the noblest duties; it is not good to be always thinking of temptations, even with a view to avoid them. I shall never seek temptation: but in whatever situation Providence may place me for the future, the eight months I pass at Clarens will be my security; nor shall I be afraid that any one will rob me of the prize you taught me to deserve. I shall never be weaker than I have been, nor shall ever have greater temptations to resist. I have left the bitterness of remorse, and I have tasted the sweets of victory, after all which I need not hesitate a moment in making my choice; every circumstance of my past life, even my errors, being a security for my future behaviour.

I shall not pretend to enter with you into any new or profound disquisitions, concerning the order of the universe, and the government of those beings of which it is composed: it will be sufficient for me to say, that in matters so far above human comprehension there is no other way of rightly judging of things invisible, but by induction from those which are visible; and that all analogy makes for those general laws which you seem to reject. The most rational ideas we can form of the Supreme Being confirm this opinion: for, although Omnipotence

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lies under no necessity of adopting methods to abridge his labour, it is nevertheless worthy of Supreme Wisdom to prefer the most simple modes of action, that there may be nothing useless either in cause or effect. In the formation of man he endowed him with all the necessary faculties to accomplish what should be required of him ; and when we ask of him the power to do good, we ask nothing of him, but what he has already given us. He has given us understanding to know what is good, a heart to love*, and liberty to make choice of it. Therefore, in these sublime gifts consists divine grace ; and as we have all received it, we are all accountable for its effects.

I have heard, in my time, a good deal of argument against the free-agency of man, and despise all its sophistry. A casuist may take what pains he will to prove that I am no free agent, my innate sense of freedom constantly destroys his arguments: for whatever choice I make after deliberation, I feel plainly that it depended only on myself to have made the contrary. Indeed all the scholastic subtilties I have heard on this head are futile and frivolous ; because they prove too much, are equally used to oppose truth and falsehood ; and, whether man be a free agent or not, serve equally to prove one or the other. With these kind of reasoners, the Deity himself is not a free agent, and the word liberty is in fact a term of no

* St. Preux supposes moral conscience to depend on sentiment not on judgment, which is contrary to the opinion of the philosophers. I am apt to think however that he is in the right.

meaning. They triumph, not in having solved the difficulty, but in having substituted a chimaera in its room. They begin by supposing that every intelligent being is merely passive, and from that supposition deduce consequences to prove its inactivity: a very convenient method of argumentation truly! if they accuse their adversaries of reasoning in this manner, they do us injustice. We do not *suppose* ourselves free and active beings: we feel that we are so. It belongs to them to shew not only that this sentiment may deceive us, but that it really does so †. The Bishop of Cloyne has demonstrated that, without any diversity in appearances, body or matter may have no absolute existence; but is this enough to induce us to affirm that it absolutely has no existence? In all this, the mere phenomenon would cost more trouble than the reality; and I will always hold by that which appears the most simple.

I don't believe, therefore, that after having provided in every shape for the wants of man in his formation, God interests himself in an extraordinary manner, for one person more than another. Those who abuse the common aids of Providence are unworthy such assistance, and those who make good use of them have no occasion for any other. Such a partiality appears to me injurious to divine justice. You will say, this severe and discouraging doctrine may be

* This is not the matter in dispute. It is to know whether the will be determined without a cause, or what is the cause that determines the will.

deduced from the holy Scripture. Be it so. Is it not my first duty to honour my Creator? In whatever veneration then I hold the sacred text, I hold its author in a still greater; and I could sooner be induced to believe the bible corrupted or unintelligible, than that God can be malevolent or unjust. St. Paul would not have the vessel say to the potter who formed it, why hast thou framed me thus? this is very well, if the potter should apply it only to such services as he constructed it to perform; but if he should censure this vessel as being inadequate to the purpose for which it was constructed; has it not a right to ask, why hast thou made me thus?

But does it follow from hence that prayer is useless? God forbid that I should deprive myself of that resource. Every act of the understanding which raises us to God carries us above ourselves; in imploring his assistance we learn to experience it. It is not his immediate act that operates on us, it is we that improve ourselves by raising our thoughts in prayer to him*. All that we ask aright, he bestows; and, as you observe, we acquire strength in confessing our weakness. But if we abuse this ordinance and turn mystics, instead of raising ourselves to God, we are lost in our own wild imaginations; in seeking grace, we renounce reason; in order to obtain of heaven one blessing, we trample under foot another; and in obstinately persisting, that heaven should enlighten our hearts, we ex-

* Our gallant philosopher having imitated Abelard in his practice, seems desirous also of adopting his principles; their notions of prayer being a good deal alike.

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tinguish the light of our understandings. But who are we that should insist on the Deity's performing miracles, when we please, in our favour?

You know very well, there is no good thing that may not be carried into a blameable excess; even devotion itself, when it degenerates into the madness of enthusiasm. Yours is too pure ever to arrive at this excess; but you have reason to be on your guard against a less degree of it. I have heard you often censure the extasies of the pietists*; but do you know from whence they arise? from allotting a longer time to prayer than is consistent with the weakness of human nature. Hence the spirits are exhausted, the imagination takes fire, they see visions, they become inspired and prophetic; nor is it then in the power of the understanding to stop the progress of fanaticism.

Now, you shut yourself frequently in your closet, and are constant in prayer. You do not indeed as yet converse with pietists, but you read their books. Not that I ever censured your taste for the writings of the worthy Fenelon: but what have you to do with those of his disciple? You read Muralt. I indeed read him too: but I make choice of his Letters, you of his Divine Instinct: But remark his end, la-

† A sort of enthusiasts that take it into their heads to follow the gospel strictly according to the letter; in the manner of the Methodists in England, the Moravians in Germany, and the Jansenists in France; excepting, however, that the latter want only to be masters to be more severe and persecuting than their enemies.

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ment the extravagant errors of that sensible man, and think of yourself. At present a pious, a true christian, beware, Eloisa, of becoming a mere devotee.*

I receive your counsel, my dear friend, with the docility of a child, and give you mine with the zeal of a father. Since virtue, instead of dissolving our attachments, has rendered them indissoluble, the same lessons may be of use to both, as the same interests connect us. Never shall our hearts speak to each other, never shall our eyes meet without presenting to both a respectable object which shall mutually elevate our sentiments, the perfection of the one reciprocally assisting the other.

But though our deliberations may be common to both, the conclusion is not; it is yours alone to decide. Cease not, then, you who have ever been mistress of my destiny, cease not to be so still. Weigh my arguments, and pronounce sentence: whatever you order me to do, I will submit to your direction, and will at least deserve the continuance of it. Should you think it improper for me to see you personally again, you will yet be always present to my mind, and preside over my actions. Should you deprive me of the honour of educating your offspring, you will not deprive me of the virtues which you have inspired. These are the offspring of your mind, which mine adopts as its own, and will never bear to have them torn from it.

Speak to me, Eloisa, freely. And as I have now been explicit as to what I think and feel on this occasion, tell me what I must do. You know how far my destiny is connected with that of my
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illustrious friend. I have not consulted him on this occasion; I have neither shewn him this letter nor yours. If he should know that you disapprove his project, or rather that of your husband, he will reject it himself; and I am far from designing to deduce from thence any objection to your scruples; he only ought to be ignorant of them till you have finally determined. In the mean time, I shall find some means or other to delay our departure, in which, though they may surprise him a little, I know he will acquiesce. For my own part, I had rather never see you more, than to see you only just to bid you again adieu: and to live with you as a stranger, would be a state of mortification which I have not deserved.

L E T T E R CLVIII.

From Mrs. WOLMAR.

HOW does your head-strong imagination affright and bewilder itself! and at what, pray? truly at the sincerest proofs of my friendship and esteem which you ever experienced; at the peaceful reflections which my solicitude for your real happiness inspired; at the most obliging, the most advantageous, and the most honourable proposal that was ever made you; at my desire, perhaps an indiscreet one, of uniting you by indissoluble ties to our family; at the desire of making a relation, a kinsman of

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an ingrate, who affects to believe I want to discard him as a friend. To remove your present uneasiness, you need only take what I write in the most natural sense the words will bear. But you have long delighted in tormenting yourself with false constructions. Your letters are like your life, sublime and mean, masterly and puerile. Ah, my dear philosopher! will you never cease to be a child?

Where, pray, have you learnt that I intended to impose on you new laws, to break with you, and send you back to the farthest part of the world? do you really find this to be the tenour of my letter? in anticipating the pleasure of living with you, I was fearful of those inconveniencies, which I conceived might possibly arise; therefore endeavoured to remove them, by making your fortune more equal to your merit and the regard I had for you. This is my whole crime; is there any thing in it at which you have reason to be alarmed?

Indeed, my friend, you are in the wrong; for you are not ignorant how dear you are to me, and how easy it is for you to obtain your wish without seeking occasion to torment others or yourself.

You may be assured that, if your residence here is agreeable to you, it will be equally so to me; and that nothing Mr. Wolmar has done for me gives me greater satisfaction than the care he has taken to establish you in this house. I agree to it with pleasure, and know we shall be useful to each other. More ready to listen to good advice than to suggest it to ourselves, we have both occasion for a guide:
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who can be more sensible of the danger of going astray than he whose return has cost him so dear? what object can better represent that danger? after having broken through such connections as once subsisted between us, the remembrance of them should influence us to do nothing unworthy of the virtuous motives which induced us to break them. Yes, I shall always think myself obliged to make you the witness of every action of my life, and to communicate to you every sentiment with which my heart is inspired. Ah! my friend! I may be weak before the rest of the world, but I can answer for myself in your company.

It is in this delicacy, which always survives true love, and not in Mr. Wolmar's subtle distinctions, that we are to look for the cause of that elevation of soul, that innate fortitude we experience. Such an explication is at least more natural, and does more honour to our hearts, than his, and has a greater tendency to encourage us to virtue, which alone is sufficient to give it the preference. Hence you may be assured, that, so far am I from being in such a whimsical disposition as you imagine, that I am just the reverse. In so much that, if the project of your returning to reside here must be given up, I shall esteem such an event as a great misfortune to you, to me, to my children, and even to my husband; on whose account alone you know I have many reasons for desiring your presence. But to speak only of my own particular inclination: you remember your first arrival. Did I shew less pleasure at seeing you than you felt in seeing me? has it ever ap-
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peared to you that your stay at Clarens gave me the least trouble or uneasiness? did you think I betrayed the least pleasure at your departure? must I go farther and speak to you with my usual freedom? I will frankly confess to you then, that the six last months we passed together were the happiest of my life, and that in that short space of time I tasted all the happiness of which my sensibility has furnished me the idea.

Never shall I forget one day, in particular, of the past winter, when, after having been reading the journal of your voyages and that of your friend's adventures, we supped in the Apollo. It was then that, reflecting on the felicity with which Providence had blessed me in this world, I looked round and saw all my friends about me; my father, my husband, my children, my cousin, Lord B——, and you, without counting Fanny, who did not cast the least blemish on the scene. This little saloon, said I to myself, contains all that is dear to my heart, and perhaps all that is desirable in this world. I am here surrounded by every thing that interests me. The whole universe to me is in this little spot. I enjoy at once the regard I have for my friends, that which they have for me, and that which they have for each other: their mutual good-will either comes from or relates to me: I see nothing but what seems to extend my being, and nothing to divide it. I exist in a manner in all those who are about me: my imagination can extend no farther: I have nothing more to desire: to reflect and to be happy is with me the same thing: I live at once in all that I love: I am
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replete with happiness and satisfied with life: come, death, when thou wilt! I no longer dread thy power: the measure of my life is full, and I have nothing new to experience worth enjoyment. The greater pleasure I enjoyed in your company, the more agreeable is it to me to reflect on it, and the more disquietude also hath every thing given me that might disturb it. We will for a moment lay aside that timid morality and pretended devotion, with which you reproach me. You must confess at least that the social pleasures we tasted sprung from that openness of heart, by which every thought, every sentiment, of the one was communicated to the other, and from which every one, conscious of being what he ought, appeared such as he really was. Let us suppose now any secret intrigue, any connection necessary to be concealed, any motive of reserve and secrecy intruding on our harmony; that moment the reciprocal pleasure we felt in seeing each other would vanish. Shyness and restraint would ensue; we should no sooner meet together than we should wish to part; and at length circumspection and decorum would bring on distrust and distaste. It is impossible long to love those of whom we are afraid or suspicious. They soon become troublesome——Eloisa troublesome!—troublesome to her friend! no, no, that cannot be; there can be no evils in nature, but such as it is possible to support.

In thus freely telling you my scruples, I do not pretend, however, to make you change your resolutions; but to induce you to reconsider the motives on which they are founded;
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left, in taking a step all the consequences of which you may not foresee, you might have reason to repent at a time when you will not dare retract it. As to Mr. Wolmar's having no fears, it was not his place to fear, but yours. No one is so proper a judge of what is to be feared of you, as yourself. Consider the matter well then; and, if nothing is in reality to be feared, tell me so, and I shall think of it no more: for I know your sincerity, and never can distrust your intentions. Your heart may be capable of an accidental error; but can never be guilty of a premeditated crime, and this it is that makes the distinction between a weak man and a wicked one.

Besides, though my objections had really more weight than I am inclined to think they have, why must things be viewed in their most disadvantageous light? Surely there can be no necessity for such extream precautionary measures. It cannot be requisite that you should break through all your projects, and fly from us for ever. Though young in years, you are possessed of all the experience of age. The tranquillity of mind which succeeds the noble passion, is a sensation which increases by fruition. A susceptible heart may dread a state of repose, to which it has been unaccustomed; but a little time is sufficient to reconcile us to our peaceful situation, and in a little time more we give it the preference. For my part, I foresee the hour of your security to be nearer than you yourself imagine. Extrems, you know, never last long; you have loved too much not to become in time indifferent: the cinder which is
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cast from the furnace can never be lighted again, but before it becomes such the coal must be totally burnt out. Be vigilant but for a few years more, and you will then have nothing to fear; your acceptance of my proposal would at once have removed all danger; but, independent of that view, such an attachment has charms enough to be desired for its own sake; and if your delicacy prevents you from closing with my proposals, I have no need to be informed how much such a restraint must cost you. At the same time, however, I am afraid that the pretences which impose on your reason, are many of them frivolous: I am afraid, that in piquing yourself on the fulfilling of engagements which no longer exist, you only make a false shew of virtue, in a constancy, for which you are by no means to be commended, and which is at present intirely misplaced. I have already told you, that I think the observance of a rash and criminal vow is an additional crime. If yours were not so at first, it is become so now; and that is sufficient to annul it. The promise which no man ought to break, is that of being always a man of virtue, and resolute in the discharge of his duty; to change when that is changed, is not levity, but constancy. Act at all times as virtue requires you to do, and you will never break your word. But if there be among your scruples any solid objection, we will examine it at leisure. In the mean time, I am not very sorry that you did not embrace my scheme with the same avidity as I formed it; that my blunder, if it be one, may give you less pain. I had meditated this project during the absence of my

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cousin, with whom, however, I have since had some general conversation on the subject of a second marriage, and find her so averse to it, that, in spite of the regard which I know she has for you, I am afraid I must exert a greater authority than becomes me, to overcome her reluctance; for this is a point in which friendship ought to respect the bent of the inclinations.

I will own nevertheless that I still abide by my design; it would be so agreeable to us all; would so honourably extricate you from your present precarious situation in life; would so unite all our interests, and make so natural an obligation of that friendship which is so delightful to all, that I cannot think of giving it up intirely. No, my friend, you can never be too nearly allied to me; it is not even enough that you might be my cousin; I could wish you were my brother.

Whatever may be the consequence of these notions, do more justice to my sentiments for you. Make use without reserve of my friendship, my confidence and my esteem. Remember I shall not prescribe any rules to you; nor do I think I have any reason to do it. Deny me not however the privilege of giving you advice, but imagine not I lay you under any commands. If you think you can securely reside at Clarens, come hither; stay here: you cannot give me greater pleasure. But, if you think a few years longer absence necessary to cure the suspicious remains of impetuous youth, write to me often in your absence; come and see us as often as you will, and let us cultivate a cor-
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respondence founded on the most cordial intimacy.

What pains will not such consolation alleviate? what absence will not be supportable under the pleasing hope of at last ending our days together! I will do yet more; I am ready to put one of my children under your care; I shall think him safer in your hands than my own; and, when you bring him back, I know not which of you will give me the greater pleasure by your return. On the other hand, if you become intirely reasonable, banish your chimerical notions, and are willing to deserve my cousin, come, pay her your best respects and make her happy. Come then, and surmount every obstacle that opposes your success, and make a conquest of her heart: such assistance as my friendship can give, shall not on my part be wanting. Come, and make each other happy, and nothing more will be wanting to render me completely so. But, whatever resolution you take, after having maturely considered the matter, speak confidently, and affront your friend no more by your groundless suspicions.

Let me not however, in thinking so much of you, forget myself. My turn to be heard must come at last; for you act with your friends in a dispute, as with your adversaries at chess; you defend yourself by attacking them. You excuse your being a philosopher by accusing me of being a devotee. I am then, in your opinion a devotee, or ready to become one: well, be it so. Contemptible denominations never change the nature of things. If devotion is commendable, why am I to blame in being devout? But,

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perhaps that epithet is too low for you. The dignity of the philosopher disdains the worship of the vulgar: it would serve God in a more sublime manner, and raise even to heaven itself its pretensions and its pride. Poor philosophers!—but to return to myself.

I have, from my childhood, respected virtue, and have always cultivated my reason. I endeavoured to regulate my conduct by human understanding and sentiment, and have been ill conducted. Before you deprive me of the guide I have chosen, give me another on which I may depend. I thought myself as wise as other people, and yet a thousand others have lived more prudently than I; they must therefore have had resources which I had not. Why is it that I, knowing myself well born, have had reason to conceal my life and conversation from the world? why did I hate the sin which I committed even in spite of myself? I thought I knew my own strength, I relied on it, and was deceived. All the resistance which was in my own power, I think, I made; and yet I fell.—How must those have done who have escaped? they must have had a better support.

From their example I was induced to seek the same support, and have found in it a peculiar advantage which I did not expect. During the reign of the passions, they themselves contribute to the continuance of the anxieties they at first occasion; they retain hope always by the side of desire, and hence we are enabled to support the absence of felicity: if our expectations are disappointed, hope supplies its place; and the agreeable delusion lasts as long as the

passion which gave it birth. Thus, in a situation of this kind, passion supports itself, and the very solicitude it causes is a chimerical pleasure which is substituted for real enjoyment. Nay more, those who have no desires must be very unhappy; they are deprived, if I may be allowed the expression, of all they possess. We enjoy less that which we obtain than that which we hope for, and are seldom happy but in expectation. In fact, man, made to desire every thing and obtain little, of boundless avarice, yet narrow capacity, has received of heaven a consolatory aid, which brings to him in idea every thing he desires, displays it to his imagination, represents it to his view, and in one sense makes it his own; but to render such imaginary property still more flattering and agreeable, it is even modified to his passion. But this shadow vanishes the moment the real object appears; the imagination can no longer magnify that which we actually possess, the charms of illusion cease, where those of enjoyment begin. The world of fancy, therefore, the land of chimeras, is the only world worthy to be inhabited; and such is the inanity of human enjoyments that, except that Being which is self-existent, there is nothing delightful but that which has no existence at all.

If this effect does not always follow in the particular objects of our passions, it is infallible in the common sentiment which includes the whole. To live without pain is incompatible with our state of mortality: it would be in fact to die. He who has every thing in his power, if

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a creature, must be miserable, as he would be deprived of the pleasure of desiring ; than which every other want would be more supportable*.

This is indeed what I have in part experienced since my marriage and your return. Every thing around me gives me cause of content, and yet I am not contented. A secret languor steals into the bottom of my heart : I find it puffed up and void, as you formerly said was the case with yours ; all my attachments are not sufficient to fill it. This disquietude, I confess, is strange : but it is nevertheless true. O my friend ! I am indeed too happy : my happiness is a burden to me. Can you think of a remedy for this disgust ? for my part, I must own that a sentiment so unreasonable and so involuntary, has in a great measure diminished the value of life, and I cannot imagine what blessings it can bestow which I want, or with which I should be satisfied. Can any woman be more susceptible than I am ? Can she love her father, her husband, her children, her friends, her relations better than I do ? Can she be more generally beloved ? can she lead a life more agreeable to her taste ! Or can she be more at liberty to exchange it for any other ? Can she enjoy better health ? Can she have more expedients to divert her, or stronger ties to bind her to the world ?

* Hence it is that every sovereign who aspires to be despotic, aspires to the honour of being miserable. In every kingdom in the world, would you see the man who is the most unhappy of all his countrymen, go directly to the sovereign, particularly if he be an absolute monarch.

and yet notwithstanding all this, I am constantly uneasy : my heart sighs after something of which it is entirely ignorant.

Therefore, finding nothing in this globe capable of giving it satisfaction, my desiring soul seeks an object in another world ; in elevating itself to the source of sentiment and existence, its languor vanishes : it is reanimated, it acquires new strength and new life. It thence obtains a new existence, independent of corporeal passions, or rather it exists no longer in me, but in the immensity of the Supreme Being ; and, disencumbered for a while from its terrestrial shackles, returns to them again with patience, consoled with the expectation of futurity.

You smile at all this, my good friend ; I understand you. I have indeed pronounced my own condemnation, having formerly censured the heart which I now approve. To this I have only one word to answer ; and that is, I then spoke without experience. I do not pretend to justify it in every shape. I don't pretend to say, this visionary taste is prudent ; I only say, it is a delightful supplement to that sense of happiness which in other things exhausts itself by enjoyment. If it be productive of evil, doubtless it ought to be rejected ; if it deceives the heart by false pleasure, it ought also on that account to be rejected. But after all, which has the greater incentive to virtue, the philosopher with his sublime maxims, or the Christian with his humble simplicity ? Who is most happy even in this world, the sage with his profound understanding, or the enthusiast with his rapture of devotion ? What business have I to think or imagine,

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when my faculties are all in a manner alienated? Will you say intoxication has its pleasures? be it so, and be mine esteemed such if you will. Either leave me in this agreeable delirium, or shew me a more delightful situation.

I have condemned indeed the extasies of the mystics, and condemn them still, when they serve to detach us from our duty; and, by raising in us a disgust against an active life by the charms of contemplation, seduce us into that state of quietism which you imagine me so near; and from which I believe myself nevertheless to be as far distant as you. I know very well that to serve God is not to pass our lives on our knees in prayer; that it is to discharge on earth those obligations which our duty requires; it is to do, with a view to please him, every thing which the situation in which he hath placed us demands,

Il cor gradisce;

E serve a lui chi 'l suo dover compisce.

To have a heart that glows with pure desire,
To love and serve where duty may require.

We ought first to perform the duties of our station, and then pray when we have time. This is the rule I have endeavoured to follow: I don't make that self-examination, with which you reproach me, a task, but a recreation: I don't see why, among the pleasures that are within my reach, I should be forbidden the most affecting and the most innocent of all.

I have examined myself with more severity, since the receipt of your letter. I have enquired into the effects which the pious inclination,

that so much displeases you, produces in my mind ; and I can safely say, I see nothing that should give me reason to fear, at least so soon as you imagine, the evils of excessive and superfluous devotion.

In the first place, I have not so fervent a longing after this exercise as to give me pain when I am deprived of an opportunity, nor am I out of humour at every avocation from it. It never interrupts my thoughts in the business of the day, nor gives me any disgust or impatience in the discharge of my duty. If retirement be sometimes necessary, it is when I have felt some disagreeable emotion, and am better in my closet than elsewhere. It is there that, entering into the examination of myself, I recover my temper and ease. If any care troubles me, if any pain affects me, it is there I go and lay them down. Every pain, every trouble vanishes before a greater object. In reflecting on all the bounties of providence towards me, I am ashamed to be sensible of such trifling ills, and to forget its greater mercies. I require neither frequent nor long intervals of solitude. When I am affected by involuntary sadness, the shedding a few tears before him who is the comforter of hearts, relieves mine in an instant. My reflections are never bitter nor grievous ; even my repentance is free from dread : my errors give me less cause of fear than of shame ; I regret that I have committed them, but I feel no remorse, nor dread of their effects. The God I serve is a merciful Being ; a Father, whose goodness only affects me, and surpasses all his other attributes. His power astonishes me ; his immensity con-

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founds my ideas ; his justice — but he has made man weak ; and though he be just, he is merciful. An avenging God is the God of the wicked. I can neither fear him on my own account, nor pray for his vengeance to be exerted against any other. It is the God of peace, the God of goodness whom I adore. I know, I feel, I am the work of his hands, and trust to see him at the last day, such as he has manifested himself to my heart, during my life.

It is impossible for me to tell you how many pleasing ideas hence render my days agreeable, and give joy to my heart. In leaving my closet in such a disposition, I feel myself more light and gay. Every care vanishes, every embarrassment is removed ; nothing rough or disagreeable appears ; but all is smooth and flowing : every thing wears a pleasant countenance ; it costs me no pains to be in good humour ; I love those better whom I loved before, and am still more agreeable to them : even my husband is more pleased with the disposition which is the effect of such rational devotion. Devotion, he says, is the opium of the soul. When taken in small quantities, it enlivens, it animates, it supports it : a stronger dose lulls it to sleep, enrages or destroys it. I hope I shall never proceed to such extremes.

You see I am not so much offended at the title of devotee, as perhaps you expected ; but then I do not value it at the rate you imagine : yet I would not have the term *devotion* applied to any affected external deportment, and to a sort of employment which dispenses with every other. Thus that Mrs. Guyon you mention, had in my opinion done better to have carefully discharged

her duty as mistress of her family, to have educated her children in the christian faith ; and to have governed her servants prudently, than to have composed books of devotion, disputed with bishops, and at last be imprisoned in the Bastile, for her unintelligible reveries.

I approve just as little of that mystical and metaphorical language, which feeds the heart with chimeras, and in the place of spiritual love, substitutes sentiments too nearly allied to carnal affections, and too apt to excite them. The more susceptible the heart, or lively the imagination, the more we ought to be on our guard against those images by which they may be affected ; for how can we see the relations of the mystical object if we do not at the same time see the sensual ; and how can a modest woman have the assurance to contemplate those objects in her imagination, which she would blush to look on.

But what sets me most against these devotees by profession, is that affectation of manners which renders them insensible to humanity ; that excessive pride which makes them look down with pity on the rest of mankind. If ever they condescend to stoop from their imaginary elevation to do an act of charity, it is always done in a manner extremely mortifying to the object : their pity is so cruel and insulting, their justice is so rigid, their charity so severe, their zeal so bitter, their contempt so much like hatred, that even the insensibility of the rest of the world is less cruel than their pity. Their love for heaven serves them as an excuse for loving no body on earth ; they have even no affection for one another ; nor is there an instance

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stance of sincere friendship to be found among people of extreme devotion. The more detached they affect to be from the world, the more they expect from it ; and one would think their devotion to God is exerted only that they may have a pretext to exercise his authority over the rest of his creatures.

I have such an aversion for all abuses of this kind as should naturally be my security : if nevertheless I am doomed to fall, it will not be voluntarily, and I hope, from the friendship of those who are about me, that it will not be without warning. I must own, I now think that it was possible for my former inquietude concerning my husband, to have effected such a change. Happily, the prudent letter of my Lord B——, to which you very reasonably refer me, together with his sensible and consolatory conversation, as well as yours, have intirely dissipated my fears and changed my principles. I now see plainly that an intolerating spirit must by degrees become obdurate. For what charity can be long preserved for those who we think must inevitably be damned ? To love them would be to hate God for punishing them. To act then on principles of humanity, we must take upon ourselves to condemn actions only, and not men. Let us not assume the horrible function of devils. Let us not so lightly throw open the gates of hell for our fellow-creatures. Alas ! if all those are destined to be eternally miserable who deceive themselves, where is the mortal who can avoid it ?

O my friends ! of what a load have you eased my heart ? in teaching me that an error

in judgment is no crime, you have delivered me from a thousand tormenting scruples. I leave to others the subtle interpretation of dogmas which I do not comprehend, and content myself with those glaring truths which strike and at once convince me ; those practical truths which instruct me in my duty. As to any thing farther, I abide by the rule of your old answer to Mr. Wolmar. A man is not master of his own sentiments to believe or disbelieve what he pleases. Can it be a crime for one not to be a logician ? No, it is not the business of conscience to instruct us in the truth of things, but in the maxims of our duty. It does not teach us to reason well, but to act aright. In what can my husband be criminal before God ? Does he turn his eye from the contemplation of the Deity ? God himself hath hid his face from his view. He does not shun the truth ; the truth avoids him. He is not actuated by pride ; he does not seek to convert any one to his own opinion. He is glad they are of a different one. He approves of our sentiments, he wishes he had the same, but cannot. He is deprived of our consolations and our hopes. He acts uprightly without even expecting a recompense : he is in fact more virtuous, more disinterested than we. He is indeed truly to be pitied ! but wherefore should he be punished ? No : goodness, sincerity, honesty, virtue, these are what heaven requires, and what it will undoubtedly reward : these constitute the true service which the Deity requires, and that service Mr. Wolmar most invariably performs. If God judges of our faith by our works, to be truly virtuous is to be-

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believe in him. A true christian is a virtuous man : the real infidels are the vicious.

Be not surpris'd, therefore, my dear friend, that I do not dispute with you many particulars of your letter, concerning which we are not of the same opinion. I know too well what you are, to be in pain about what you believe. What do all those idle questions about free-agency concern me? Whether I myself have the power to do good, or can obtain it by prayer, if in the end I am enabled to do it, does it not amount to the same thing? Whether I acquire what is wanting by asking for it, or the Deity grants it to my prayers, if it be necessary to ask in order to have it, is not this a sufficient explanation? Happy enough to agree about the principal articles of our faith, why need we enquire farther? ought we to be desirous of penetrating into the bottomless abyss of metaphysics, and, in disputing about the divine Essence, throw away the short time which is allotted us here to revere and honour the Deity? We are ignorant what he is; but we know that he exists, and that is sufficient: he manifests himself in his works, we feel him constantly within us. We may dispute, but cannot sincerely disbelieve his existence. He has given us that degree of sensibility which enables us to perceive, to embrace him; let us pity those to whom he has not imparted such a portion of susceptibility, without flattering ourselves that we shall be able to make them sensible of what they cannot feel. Let us respect his decrees in silence and do our duty: this is the best method to make profelytes.

Do you know any man of better sense or a more enlightened understanding than Mr. Wolmar? Do you know any one more sincere, more upright, more just, less subject to the controul of his passions; who will be a greater gainer by divine justice or the soul's immortality? Do you know any man more nervous, more sublime, more convincing in a dispute than Lord B——? is there any person by his virtue more worthy of entering on the defence of the cause of God, more certain of his existence, more sincerely penetrated with the idea of divine majesty, more zealous for his glory, and more capable of supporting it? Yet you have been a witness of what passed during three months at Clarens: you have seen two men, having the highest esteem and respect for each other, and equally disdainful of the pedantry and quirk of scholastic logic, pass a whole winter in prudent and peaceful as well as lively and profound argumentations, with a view to convert each other; you have seen them attack and defend themselves, and take every advantage of which human understanding is capable; and that on a subject wherein both, being equally interested, desired nothing so earnestly as to be of one mind.

What was the consequence? their mutual esteem is augmented, and yet both retain their former sentiments: if such an example does not for ever cure a prudent man of the rage of dispute, the love of truth I am sure never will.

For my part, I have thrown aside, and that for ever, such an useless weapon; and am determined never to mention a single word more

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to my husband about religion, unless it be to give a reason for mine. Not that a notion of divine toleration has rendered me indifferent to his. I must confess that, though I am become tranquil about his future state, I do not find I am the less zealous for his conversion. I would lay down my life to see him once convinced of the truth of divine revelation, if not for the sake of his future happiness, at least for his happiness in this life. For of how many pleasures is he not on this account deprived? What sentiments can give him comfort in his afflictions? What spectator excites him to those good deeds he performs in secret? What reward does he hope for from his virtue? How can he look upon death? No, I hope he will not meet it in this terrible situation. There remains but one expedient more for me to try to prevent it; and to that I consecrate the remainder of my life. This is not to convince, but to affect, him: to set him a prevailing example, and to make religion so amiable that he shall not be able to resist her charms. Ah! my friend! what a forcible argument against infidelity is the life of a true christian? Do you believe there is a being on earth proof against it? this is the task I impose on myself for the future; assist me to perform it. Mr. Wolmar is cold, but not insensible. What a picture might we lay open to his heart? his friends, his children, his wife, all uniting to his edification! When, without preaching about God in our discourses, we shall demonstrate him by those actions which he inspires, by those virtues of which he is the author, by the pleasure we take in his

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service : when he shall see a sketch of paradise in his own house ; when an hundred times a day he shall be compelled to cry out : “ Human nature is of itself incapable of this ; something divine must prevail here.”

If my enterprise pleases you, if you find yourself worthy to concur in it, come and let us pass our days together, and never part more till death. If the project displeases or frightens you, listen to the dictates of your conscience ; that will teach you your duty. I have no more to say. Agreeable to what Lord B—— intimates, I shall expect you both towards the latter end of next month. You will hardly know your apartment again ; but in the alteration made in it you will discover the care of a good friend, who took a pleasure in ornamenting it for you. You will find there, also, a small assortment of books, which she bought for you at Geneva, of a better taste than the *Alonis* ; not but that for the jest's sake you will find that too. You must however be discreet ; for, as she would not have you know this is her doing, I hasten to finish my letter before she comes to forbid my speaking of it. Adieu, my dear friend ; our party of pleasure to the castle of Chillon will take place to-morrow without you. It will not be the better for that. The bailiff has invited us with our children, which leaves me no excuse : but I know not why, and yet I cannot help wishing we were safe returned.

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L E T T E R C L I X.

From FANNY ANET.

O H Sir ! O my benefactor ! what tidings do they order me to write to you ! Madam—my poor mistress—good God ! methinks I see already how frightened you are ! but you cannot see the affliction we are all in here.—But I have not a moment to lose—I must tell you.—I must run—Oh that I had already told you all !—what will become of you, when you know our misfortune ! The whole family went out yesterday to dine at Chillon. The baron, who was going into Savoy to spend some days at the castle of Blonay, went away after dinner.

The company attended him a little way, and afterwards walked along the dyke. Mrs. Orbe and the bailiff's lady went before with my master ; my mistress followed, having hold by one hand of Harriot and by the other of Marcellin. I came after with the eldest. His honour, the bailiff, who had staid behind to speak to some body, came up ; and joining the company, offered my mistress his arm ; which, in order to accept of, she sent Marcellin to me. I ran forward to meet him, while the child did the same towards me ; but, in running, his foot slipped, and he fell unhappily into the water. I screamed out, when my mistress, turning her head and seeing the child in the water, flew back in an instant and threw herself in after him.

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Unhappy that I am! why did I not throw myself in too! better had I been drowned on the spot! with difficulty I kept the eldest from leaping after its mother; who kept struggling with the other in her arms.—No boat, nor people were at hand, so that some time past before they could be got out of the water—the child soon recovered, but as for the mother—the fright, the fall, the condition she was in—ah none knows better than I the danger of such a fall! she was taken out, and remained a good while insensible. The moment she came to herself, she enquired eagerly after the child—heavens! with what transport did she embrace him! I thought she was quite well again; but her spirits lasted her but for a moment: she insisted on being brought home, but fainted away several times during the journey. By some orders she gave me, I saw she believed she should not recover. Her fears were, alas! too true! she will never recover. Mrs. Orbe is a good deal more altered than she. They are all distracted; I am the most sensible in the whole house.—Why should I be uneasy? ah! my good mistress, if I lose you I shall never have occasion for another.—O my dear sir! may heaven enable you to support this trial! Adieu! the physician is this moment coming out of the chamber. I must run to meet him—if he gives me hopes, I will let you know it. If I say nothing, you will know too well the cause.

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LETTER CLX.

From Mrs. ORBE.

IMPRUDENT, unfortunate man! unhappy dreamer! you will now indeed never see her more—alas! the veil—Eloisa is no more.—

She has herself written to you, I refer you to her letter: respect, I charge you, her last request. Great and many are the obligations you have to discharge on this side the grave.—

LETTER CLXI.

From Mr. WOLMAR.

I Was unwilling to interrupt the first transports of your grief: my writing to you would but have aggravated your sorrow, as I was no better qualified to relate than you to read our sad tale. At present, possibly, such a relation may not be disagreeable to both. As nothing remains but the remembrance of her, my heart takes a delight in recalling every token of that remembrance to my mind. You will have some consolation in shedding tears to her memory; but of that grand relief of the unfortunate I am constitutionally deprived, and am therefore more unhappy than you.

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It is not, however, of her illness, but of herself, I would write. Another might have thrown herself into the water to save her child. Such an accident, her fever, her death are natural; and may be common to other mortals: but the employment of her last moments, her conversation, her sentiments, her fortitude, all these are peculiar to Eloisa. She was no less singular in the hour of death than she had been during the whole course of her life; and as I was the sole witness to many particulars, you can learn them from me alone.

You already know that her fright, her agitation, the fall, and the water she had imbibed, threw her into fainting fits, from which she did not recover 'till after she was brought home. On being carried into the house, she asked again for the child; the child was brought; and, seeing him walk about and return her caresses, she became apparently easy, and consented to take a little rest. Her sleep was but short, and as the physician was not yet come, she made us sit round on the bed; that is, Fanny, her cousin and me. She talked to us about her children, of the great diligence and care which her plan of education required, and of the danger of a moment's neglect. Without making her illness of any great importance, she foresaw, she said, that it would prevent her for some time from discharging her part of that duty, and charged us to divide it amongst us.

She enlarged on her own projects, on yours, on the most proper means to carry them into execution; on the observations she had made as to what would promote or injure them; and,

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in a word, on every thing which might enable us to supply her place, in the discharge of the duties of a mother, so long as she might be prevented from it herself. I thought so much precaution unnecessary for one who imagined she should be prevented from exercising such employment only for a few days: but what added to my apprehensions was to hear her enter into a long and particular charge respecting Harriot. As to her sons, she contented herself with what concerned their education in the earliest infancy, as if relying on another for the care of their youth.

But in speaking of Harriot, she went farther, extending her remarks even to her coming of age; and, being sensible that nothing could supply the place of those reflections which her own experience dictated, she gave us a clear and methodical abstract of the plan of education she had laid down, recommending it to the mother in the most lively and affecting manner.

All these exhortations, respecting the education of young persons and the duty of mothers, mixt with frequent applications to herself, could not fail to render the conversation extremely interesting: I saw indeed that it affected her too much. In the mean time, her cousin held one of her hands, pressing it every now and then to her lips, and bathing it with tears, at every reply: Fanny was not less moved; and as for Eloisa herself, I observed the big tears swell out of her eyes and steal down her cheeks; but she was afraid to let us see she wept, lest it should alarm us. But I then saw, that she knew her life was drawing

drawing towards its final period. My only hope was that her fears might deceive her, and represent the danger greater than it really was. Unhappily, however, I knew her too well to build much upon such a deception. I endeavoured several times to stop her, and at last begged of her not to waste her spirits by talking so much at once on a subject which might be continued at our leisure. Ah! my dear, replied she, don't you know that nothing hurts a woman so much as silence? and, since I find myself a little feverish, I may as well employ my discourse about useful matters as prattle away the time about trifles.

The arrival of the physician put the whole house into a confusion, which it is impossible to describe. All the domestics were gathered about the door of the chamber, where they waited with their arms folded and anxious looks, to know his opinion of their mistress's situation, as if their own destiny were depending. This sight threw poor Mrs. Orbe into such an agony of grief, that I began to be afraid of her senses. Under different pretences, therefore, I dismissed them, that their presence might no longer affect her. The physician gave us indeed a little hope, but in such vague terms that it served to convince me there was none. Eloisa was also reserved, on account of her cousin. When the doctor left the chamber I followed him, which Clara was also going to do; but Eloisa detained her, and gave me a wink which I understood, and therefore immediately told the physician, that if there were any real danger he should as carefully conceal it from Mrs. Orbe as from the patient,

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patient, lest her despair should render her incapable of attending her friend. He told me the case was indeed dangerous, but that four and twenty hours being hardly elapsed since the accident, it required more time to form a certain judgment; that the succeeding night might determine the fate of the patient; but that he could not positively pronounce any thing till the third day. Fanny alone was by on his saying this, on whom we prevailed with some difficulty to stifle her emotions, and agreed upon what was proper to tell Mrs. Orbe and the rest of the family.

Toward the evening, Eloisa prevailed with her cousin, who had sat up with her the preceding night, and was desirous of continuing her vigilance, to go to bed for some hours. In the mean time, the patient being informed that she was to be bled in the foot, and that the physician was prescribing for her, she sent for him to her bed-side, and addressed him thus.

“ Mr. Bouillon, when it is necessary to flatter
 “ a timid patient as to the danger of his case,
 “ the precaution is humane, and I approve of
 “ it; but it is a piece of cruelty to lavish equally
 “ on all, the disagreeable remedies which to
 “ many may be superfluous. Prescribe for me
 “ every thing that you think will be really use-
 “ ful, and I will punctually follow your pre-
 “ scriptions. But as to those of mere experi-
 “ ment, I beg you will excuse me: it is my
 “ body and not my mind which is disordered;
 “ and I am not afraid to end my days, but to
 “ mispend those which remain. The last mo-
 “ ments of life are too precious to be thrown
 “ away.

“ away. If you cannot prolong mine, there-
 “ fore, I beg you will at least not shorten them,
 “ by preventing me from employing them as
 “ I ought. Either recover me intirely, or
 “ leave me ; I can die alone.” Thus, my
 friend, did this woman, so mild and timid on or-
 dinary occasions, know how to exert herself in
 a resolute and serious manner at this important
 crisis.

The night was cruel and decisive. Suffoca-
 tion, oppression, fainting, her skin dry and
 burning. An ardent fever tormented her, during
 the continuance of which she was heard fre-
 quently to call out *Marcellin*, as if to prevent
 his running into the water, and to pronounce
 also another name, formerly repeated on a like
 occasion. The next day the physician told me
 plainly, that he did not think she could live three
 days. I alone was made privy to this afflicting
 piece of information, and the most terrible hour
 of my life was that wherein I kept it a secret in
 my breast, without knowing what use to make
 of it. I strayed out alone into the garden,
 musing on the measures I ought to take ; not
 without many afflicting reflections on the mis-
 fortune of being reduced, in the last stage of life,
 to that solitude, of which I was sufficiently tired,
 even before I had experienced a more agreeable
 one.

I had promised Eloisa the night before, to tell
 her faithfully the opinion of the physician, and
 she had engaged me by every prevailing argu-
 ment to keep my word. I felt that engagement
 on my conscience : but what to do I was great-
 ly at a loss ! Shall I, said I to myself, in order to
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discharge a useless and chimerical duty, afflict her soul with the news, and lengthen the pangs of death? to tell her the hour of her dissolution, is it not in fact to anticipate the fatal moment? in so short an interval what will become of the desires, the hopes, the elements of life? shall I kill my Eloisa?

Thus meditating on what I should do, I walked on with long and hasty strides, and in an agitation of mind I had never before experienced. It was not in my power to shake off the painful anxiety; it remained an insupportable weight on my spirits. At length I was determined by a sudden thought.

For whose sake, said I, do I deliberate? for hers or for mine? on whose principles do I reason? is it on her system or my own? What demonstration have I of the truth? In support of her system she also has nothing but opinion; but that opinion carries with it the force of evidence, and is in her eyes a demonstration. What right have I, in a matter which relates chiefly to her, to prefer my opinion, which I acknowledge to be doubtful, to hers which she thinks demonstrated? Let us compare the consequences of both. According to hers, her disposition in the last hour of her life will decide her fate to all eternity. According to mine, all that I can do for her will be a matter of indifference in three days. According to my system, she will be then insensible to every thing: but if she be in the right, what a difference will there be! eternal happiness or misery! perhaps — that word is terrible — wretch! risk thy own soul, and not hers.

This

'This was the first doubt I ever had concerning that scepticism you have so often attacked; but it was not the last. This doubt, however, freed me from the other. I immediately resolved, and for fear my mind should change, ran directly to Eloisa's chamber, where, after dismissing every body from their attendance, I sat down by her bed-side. I did not make use of those trifling precautions which are necessary with little minds. I was indeed for some time silent; but she looked at me and seemed to read my thoughts. Then, holding out her hand, Do you think, said she, you bring me news? no, my dear friend, I know it already; the cold hand of death is upon me; we must part for ever.

She proceeded, and continued with me a long conversation, of which I may one day give you an account; and during which she engraved her testament on my heart. If I had indeed been ignorant of her disposition before, her temper of mind at this time would sufficiently have informed me.

She asked me, if her danger was known in the house. I told her, Every one was greatly apprehensive; but that they knew nothing for certain; and that the physician had acquainted me only with his opinion. On this she conjured me carefully to keep it a secret for the remainder of the day. Clara, continued she, will not be able to support this stroke, unless it comes from my hand. I shall take upon me that afflicting office to night. It is chiefly for this reason that I desired to have the advice of a physician, that I might not subject her unnecessarily,

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cessarily, and merely on my own suggestions to so cruel a trial. Take care that she may know nothing of it before the time, or you will certainly risk the loss of a friend, and your children that of a mother. .

She then asked me after her father. I owned that I had sent an express to him: but took care to conceal from her, that the messenger, instead of contenting himself with delivering my letter, as I had ordered him, blundered out a story, from which my old friend, falsely collecting that his daughter was drowned, fell down stairs in a swoon and hurt himself; so that he kept his bed at Blonay. The hopes of seeing her father, affected her very sensibly; and the certainty I had of the vanity of such hope, had no small share in my uneasiness.

The paroxysms of the preceding night had rendered her extremely weak: nor did this long conversation at all increase her strength. In this feeble situation, therefore, she strove to get a little sleep in the day-time; nor did I know, till two days after, that she did not sleep the whole time. The family continued in great anxiety; every one waiting in mournful silence for each other to remove their uneasiness, yet, without daring to ask any questions for fear of being told more than they wished to know. If there were any good news, they said to themselves, every one would be eager enough to tell it; and the bad we shall know but too soon. In this terrible suspense they were satisfied so long as they heard of no alteration for the worse. Amidst this dreadful silence, Mrs. Orbe only was active and talkative. As soon as she

came out of Eloisa's chamber, instead of going to rest, she ran up and down the house, asking what the doctor said to the one, and to the other. She had sat up all the preceding night, and could not be ignorant of what she had seen; but she strove even to impose on herself, and to distrust the evidence of her senses. Those she interrogated always giving her favourable answers, encouraged her to ask others, which she continued to do with such an air of solicitude and poignant distress, that whoever had known the truth could not have been prevailed upon to tell it her.

In the presence of Eloisa she concealed her anxiety, and indeed the affecting object which she had before her eyes was sufficiently afflicting to suppress her vivacity. She was above all things solicitous to hide her fears from Eloisa; but she could very ill conceal them. Her trouble even appeared in her affectation to hide it. Eloisa, on her part also, spared no pains to deceive her cousin, as to the true state of her case. Without making light of her illness, she affected to speak of it as a thing that was already past, seeming uneasy only at the time necessary to restore her. How greatly did I suffer to see them mutually striving to comfort each other, while I knew that neither of them entertained that hope in their own breasts, with which each endeavoured to inspire the other.

Mrs. Orbe had sat up the two preceding nights, and had not been undressed for three days. Eloisa proposed, therefore, that she should retire to her own bed: but she refused. Well

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then, said Eloisa, let a little bed be made up for you in my chamber; if, added she, as if she had just thought of it, you will not take part of mine. Come, my dear, says she, what say you? I am not worse, and, if you have no objection, you shall sleep with me. This proposal was accepted. For my part, they turned me out of the room, and really I stood in need of rest.

I rose early the next morning; and, being anxious for what might have passed in the night, as soon as I heard them stirring, I went into her chamber. From the situation in which Mrs. Orbe appeared the preceding evening, I expected to find her extremely agitated. In entering the room, however, I saw her sitting on the settee, spiritless and pale, or rather of a livid complexion; her eyes heavy and dead; yet, she appeared calm and tranquil, but spoke little. As for Eloisa, she appeared less feeble than over-night; the tone of her voice was strong, and her gesture animated; she seemed indeed to have borrowed the vivacity of her cousin. I could easily perceive, however, that this promising appearance was in a great measure the effect of her fever; but I remarked also in her looks that something had given her a secret joy which contributed to it not a little; but of which I could not discover the cause. The physician confirmed his former opinion, the patient continued also in the same sentiments, and there remained no hope.

Being obliged to leave her for some time, I observed, in coming again into her apartment, that every thing appeared in great order. She

had caused flower-pots to be placed on the chimney-piece; her curtains were half open and tied back; the air of the room was changed; a grateful odour every where diffusing itself, so that no one would have taken it for the bed-chamber of a sick person. The same taste and elegance appeared also in her dishabille; all which gave her rather the air of a woman of quality, waiting to receive company, than of a country lady who was preparing for her last moments. She saw my surprise, smiled at it, and guessing my sentiments was going to speak to me, when the children were brought into the room. These now engaged her attention; and you may judge whether, finding herself ready to part from them for ever, her caresses were cold or moderate. I even took notice that she turned oftener, and with more warmth, to him who was the cause of her death, as if he was become more dear to her on that account.

These embraces, sighs and transports were all mysterious to the poor children. They loved her indeed tenderly; but it was with that tenderness peculiar to their age. They comprehended nothing of her condition, of the repetition of her caresses, of her regret at never seeing them more: as they saw us sorrowful and affected, they wept; but knew nothing more. We may teach children to repeat the word death; but we cannot give them any idea of it: they neither fear it for themselves or others; they fear to suffer pain, but not to die. When the excess of pain drew complaints from their poor mother, they pierced the air with their cries; but when we talked to them of losing her,

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her, they seemed stupid and comprehended nothing. Harriot alone, being a little older than the others, and of a sex in which understanding and sentiment appear earlier than in the other, seemed troubled and frightened to see her little mamma in bed, whom she used always to see stirring about with her children. I remember that, on this occasion, Eloisa made a reflection quite in character, on the ridiculous vanity of Vespasian, who kept his bed so long as he was able to do any thing, and rose when he could do no more*. I know not, says she, if it be necessary that an emperor should die out of his bed: but this I know, that the mother of a family should never take to her bed, unless to die.

After having wept over the children, and taken every one of them apart, particularly Harriot, whom she kept some time, and who lamented and sobbed grievously, she called them all three together; gave them her blessing, and, pointing to Mrs. Orbe, Go, my children, said she, go, and throw yourselves at the feet of your mother: this is she whom Providence has given you, depriving you of nothing in taking me. Immediately they all ran to her, threw

* This is not quite exact. Suetonius tells us that Vespasian employed himself as usual, and gave audience on his death-bed: but perhaps he had done better to have risen to give audience, and to have gone to bed again to die. This I know, that Vespasian, if not a great man, was at least a great prince; but it is not a time to put on the comedian at the hour of death.

themselves on their knees, and, laying hold of her hands, called her their good mamma, their second mother. Clara stooped forward to embrace them, but strove in vain to speak; she could only utter a few broken and imperfect exclamations, amidst sighs and sobs that stifled her voice. Judge if Eloisa was not moved! the scene indeed became too affecting: for which reason I interrupted it.

As soon as it was over, we sat down again round the bed; and, though the vivacity of Eloisa was a little suppressed by the foregoing scene, she preserved the same air of content in her looks: she talked on every subject with all that attention and regard which bespeaks a mind at ease; nothing escaped her; she was as intent on the conversation as if she had nothing else to think of. She proposed that we should dine in her chamber, that she might have as much of our company as possible for the short time she had to live: you may believe this proposal was not on our part rejected.

The dinner was served up without noise, confusion or disorder, but with as much regularity as if it had been in the Apollo. Fanny and the children dined with us. Eloisa, taking notice that every one wanted an appetite, had the art to prevail on us to eat of almost every thing; one time by pretending to instruct the cook, at another by asking whether she might not venture to taste this or that, and then by recommending it to us to take care of our health, without which we should not be capable of doing her the service her illness required. In short, no mistress of a family, however soli-

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citous to do the honours of her house, could in full health have shewn, even to strangers, more obliging, or more amiable marks of her kindness, than those which dying Eloisa expressed for her family. Nothing of what I expected happened, nothing of what really happened ever entered my head. In short, I was lost in astonishment.

After dinner, word was brought up that the clergyman was come. He came as a friend to the family, as he often favoured us with a visit. Though I had not sent for him, as Eloisa did not request it, I must confess to you, I was pleased to hear he was come, and imagine the most zealous believer could not on the same occasion have welcomed him with greater pleasure. His presence indeed promised the removal of many of my doubts, and some relief from my perplexity.

You will recollect the motives for my telling her of her approaching end. By the effect which, according to my notions, such a shocking piece of information should have had on her, how could I conceive that which it really had? how could I imagine that a woman, so devout as not to pass a day, when in health, without meditation, who made the exercise of prayer her delight and amusement, should at such a time as this, when she had but two days to live; when she was just ready to appear before her awful judge, instead of making peace with God and her conscience, amuse herself in ornamenting her chamber, chatting with her friends, and diverting them at their meals, without ever dropping a word concerning God's grace, or her

own salvation? what could I think of her, and her real sentiments? how could I reconcile her conduct with the notions I had entertained of her piety? how could I reconcile the use she made of her last moments to what she had said to the physician, of their great importance? all this appeared to me an inexplicable enigma; for though I did not expect to find her practising all the hypocritical airs of the devotees, it seemed to me, however, high time to think of what she judged of so much importance, and that it should suffer no delay. If one is devout amidst the noise and hurry of life, how can one be otherwise at the moment we are going to quit it, and when there remains no longer time to think of another?

These reflections led me farther than I thought I ever should proceed. I began to be uneasy lest my opinions, indiscreetly maintained, might at length have gained too much upon her belief. I had not adopted hers, and yet I was not willing that she should have renounced them. Had I been sick, I should certainly have died in my own way of thinking, but I was desirous that she should die also in hers. These contradictory notions will appear to you very extravagant; I myself do not find them very reasonable: they were, however, such as really suggested themselves, at that time. I do not undertake to justify, I only relate them.

At length the time drew near, when my doubts were to be cleared up: for it was easy to see that, sooner or later, the minister would turn the conversation on the object of his duty; and though Eloisa had been capable of disguising her

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her sentiments, it would be too difficult for her to do it in such a manner that a person, attentive and prepossessed as I was, should not see through the disguise.

It soon after happened as I expected. To pass over, however, the common-place compliments with which this worthy clergyman introduced the subject, as well as the affecting manner in which he represented the happiness of crowning a well-spent life by a christian exit; he added, that he had indeed remembered her to have maintained opinions, on some points, different from those of the church, or such as may be most reasonably deduced from the sacred writings; but that, as she had never persisted in defending them, he hoped she would die, as she had lived, in the communion of the faithful, and acquiesce in all the particulars of their common confession.

As Eloisa's answer removed at once all my doubts, and differed a good deal from the common-place discourses on such occasions, I shall give it you almost word for word; for I listened to it very attentively, and committed it to paper immediately after.

" Permit me, Sir, said she, to begin by
 " thanking you for all the care you have taken
 " to conduct me in the paths of virtue and
 " christianity, and for that complacency with
 " which you have borne with my errors when
 " I have gone astray. Filled with a due respect for your zeal, as well as gratitude for
 " all your goodness, I declare with pleasure
 " that it is to you I am indebted for all my
 " good resolutions, and that you have always

“ directed me to do what was right, and to believe what was true.

“ I have lived and I die in the protestant communion, whose maxims are deduced from scripture and reason ; concerning which my heart hath always confirmed what my lips uttered ; and though I may not have had always that docility in regard to your precepts which perhaps I ought, it has arisen from my aversion to all kind of hypocrisy : that which I could not believe, I never could profess ; I have always sincerely fought what was most conformable to truth, and the glory of my Creator. I may have been deceived in my research ; not having the vanity to think I have always been in the right. I may, indeed, have been constantly in the wrong ; but my intention has been invariably good. This was as much as was in my own power. If God did not vouchsafe to enlighten my understanding farther, he is too merciful and just to demand of me an account of what he has not committed to my care.

“ This, Sir, is all I think necessary to say on the opinions I profess. As to the rest, let my present situation answer for me. With my head distracted by illness and subjected to the delirium of a fever, is it now a proper time to endeavour to reason better than I did when in health, when my understanding was unimpaired and as sound as I received it from my Maker ?—if I was deceived then, am I less subject to be so now ? and in my present weakness does it depend on me to believe otherwise than I did when in full
“ health

" health and strength of body and mind? It
 " is our reason which determines our be-
 " lief, but mine has lost its best faculties;
 " what dependance then could be made on the
 " opinions I should now adopt without it?
 " what now remains for me to do, is to appeal
 " to what I believed before; for the upright-
 " ness of my intention is the same, though I
 " have lost my judgment. If I am in an er-
 " ror, I am sorry for and detest it; and this is
 " sufficient to set my heart at ease as to my be-
 " lief.

" With respect to my preparation for death;
 " that, Sir, is made; badly indeed I own, but
 " it is done in the best manner I could; and
 " at least much better than I can do it now.
 " I endeavoured to discharge that impor-
 " tant part of my duty before I became inca-
 " pable of it. I prayed in health;—when I
 " was strong, I struggled with divine grace for
 " favour; at present, now I am weak, I am
 " resigned, and rely upon it. The best prayers
 " of the sick are patience and resignation.
 " The preparation of death, is a good life; I
 " know of no other. While I conversed with
 " you, while I meditated by myself, while I
 " endeavoured to discharge the duties which
 " Providence ordained for me; it was then I
 " was preparing myself for death: for meeting
 " my God and judge at my last hour. It was
 " then I adored him with all my faculties and
 " powers; what more can I now do, when I
 " have lost them? Is my languid soul in a
 " condition to raise itself to the Almighty?
 " this remnant of a half extinguished life, ab-
 K 6 " forbed

“ forbed in pain, is it worthy of being offered
 “ up to God? No, Sir, he leaves it me to em-
 “ ploy it for those he taught me to love, and
 “ from whom it is his fovereign will that I
 “ should now depart: I am going to leave
 “ them to go to him; it is therefore with them
 “ I should now concern myself; I shall soon
 “ have nothing to do but with him alone: the
 “ last pleasure I take on earth shall be in doing
 “ my last duty; is not that to serve him
 “ and do his will; to discharge all those du-
 “ ties which humanity enjoins me before I
 “ throw it off entirely? what have I to do to
 “ calm troubles which I have not? My con-
 “ science is not troubled: if sometimes it has
 “ accused me, it has done it more when I was
 “ in health than at present. It tells me now
 “ that God is more merciful than I am criminal;
 “ and my confidence increases as I find I ap-
 “ proach nearer to him. I do not present him
 “ with an imperfect, tardy, or forced repent-
 “ ance, which, dictated by fear, can never be
 “ truly sincere, and is only a snare by which
 “ the false penitent is deceived. I do not pre-
 “ sent him with the service of the remnant and
 “ latter end of my days, full of pain and sor-
 “ row, a prey to sickness, grief, anxiety, death;
 “ and which I would not dedicate to his service
 “ till I could do nothing else. No, I present
 “ before him my whole life, full indeed of er-
 “ rors and faults, but exempt from the remorse
 “ of the impious, and the crimes of the wicked.
 “ To what punishment can a just God con-
 “ demn me? the reprobate, it is said, hate him.
 “ Must he not first make me not love him?

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“ No, I fear not to be found one of that number. O thou great eternal being! supreme intelligence! source of life and happiness! creator! preserver! father! lord of nature! God powerful and good, of whose existence I never doubted for a moment, and under whose eye I have always delighted to live! I know, I rejoice that I am going to appear before thy throne. In a few days my soul, delivered from its earthly tabernacle, shall begin to pay thee more worthily that homage which will constitute my happiness to all eternity. I look upon what I shall be, till that moment comes, as nothing. My body, indeed, still lives; but my intellectual life is at an end. I am at the end of my career, and am already judged from what is past. To suffer, to die, is all that I have now to do: and this is nature’s work. I have endeavoured to live in such a manner as to have no occasion to concern myself at death, and now it approaches, I see it without fear. Those who sleep in the bosom of a father, are in no fear of being awaked.”

This discourse, begun in a grave and slow voice, and ending in a more elevated and animated tone, made on every one present, myself not excepted, an impression the more lively, as the eyes of her who pronounced it seemed to sparkle with a supernatural fire; rays of light seemed to encircle her brow; and, if there be any thing in this world which deserves the name of celestial, it was certainly the face of Eloisa, while she was thus speaking.

The

The minister himself was transported at what he heard; and, lifting up his hands and eyes to heaven, Good God! said he, behold the worship that truly honours thee! deign to render it propitious; for how seldom do mortals offer thee the like! Madam, continued he, turning to Eloisa and approaching her bed, I thought to have instructed you, but have myself been instructed. I have nothing farther to say. You have that true faith, which knows how to love God. Bear with you that precious repose and testimony of a good conscience, and believe me it will not deceive you. I have seen many christians in your situation, but never before saw any thing like this. What a difference between such a peaceful end, and that of those terrified sinners, who implore heaven with vain and idle prayers unworthy to be heard. Your death, madam, is as exemplary as your life: you have lived to exercise your charity to mankind, and die a martyr to maternal tenderness. Whether it please God to restore you to us, to serve us as an example, or whether he is pleased to call you to himself to crown your virtue with its due reward, may we all so long as we survive, live like you, and in the end follow your example in death; we shall then be certain of happiness in another life.

He offered now to take his leave; but Eloisa prevailed on him to stay. You are one of my friends, said she to him, and one of those I take the greatest pleasure to see; it is for those my last moments are so precious. We are going to part for too long a time, to part so soon now.

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He was well pleased to stay, and I went out and left them.

At my return, I found the conversation continued still on the same subject ; but in a less interesting manner. The minister complained much of that false notion, which makes religion only of use to persons on their death-bed, and represents its ministers as men of ill omen. We are looked upon, says he, in common rather as the messengers of sorrow and death, than of the glad tidings of life and salvation : and that because, from the convenient opinion of the world that a quarter of an hour's repentance is sufficient to efface fifty years of guilt, we are only welcome at such a time. We must be clothed in a mourning habit and affect a morose air, in short nothing is spared to render us dismal and terrifying. It is yet worse, in other religious professions. A dying Roman-catholic is surrounded by objects the most terrifying, and is pestered with ceremonies that in a manner bury him alive. By the pains they take to keep the devils from him, he imagines he sees his chamber full of them ; he dies a hundred times with fear before he expires, and it is in this state of horror the church delights to plunge the dying sinner, in order to make the greater advantage of his purse.

Thank God, said Eloisa, that we were not brought up in those venal religions, which murder people to inherit their wealth, and who, selling heaven to the rich, would extend even to the other world that unjust inequality which prevails in this. I do not at all doubt that such mournful ideas encourage infidelity, and create a natural aversion for that species of worship which

which adopts them. I hope, continued she, looking stedfastly at me, that he who may educate our children will adopt very different maxims: and that he will not represent religion to them as a mournful exercise, by continually setting before them the prospect of death. If they learn once but to live well, they will of themselves know how to die.

In the continuation of this discourse, which became less affecting and more interrupted than I shall tell you, I fully comprehended the maxims of Eloisa, and the conduct at which I had been surprized. It appeared that, perceiving her situation quite desperate, she contrived only to remove that useless and mournful appearance which the fear of most persons when dying makes them put on. This she did either to divert our affliction, or to banish from her own view a spectacle so moving, and at the same time unnecessary. Death, said she, is of itself sufficiently painful! why must it be rendered hideous? the care which others throw away in endeavouring to prolong their lives, I will employ to enjoy mine to the last moment. Shall I make an hospital of my apartment, a scene of disgust and trouble, when my last care will be to assemble in it all those that are most dear to me? If I suffer the air to stagnate, I must banish my children or expose their health to danger. If I put on a frightful dress and appearance myself, I shall be known no longer; I shall be no longer the same person; you will all remember to have loved me, and will be able to bear me no more. I shall, even alive, have the frightful spectacle of horror before me, which I shall be

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to my friends when I am dead. Instead of this, I have discovered the art to extend my life without prolonging it. I exist, I love, am loved, and live till the last breath forsakes me. The moment of death is nothing: the natural evil is a trifle; and I have overcome all those of opinion.

This and a good deal of similar discourse passed between the patient, the minister, sometimes the doctor, Fanny, and me. Mrs. Orbe was present all the while, but never joined in the conversation. Attentive to the wants of her friend, she was very assiduous to serve her, when she wanted any assistance; the rest of the time she remained immovable and almost inanimate; she kept looking at her without speaking, and without understanding any thing of what was said.

As to myself; fearing that Eloisa would talk too much for her strength, I took the opportunity of the minister and physician's talking to each other aside, to tell her, in her ear, that she talked a great deal for a sick person, and reasoned very profoundly for one who conceived herself incapable of reasoning. Yes, replied she, very low, I talk too much for a person that is sick, but not for one that is dying; I shall very soon have nothing more to say. With respect to argument, I reason no more now; I have done with it. I have often reflected on my last illness; I am now to profit by my reflection. I am no longer capable of reflecting nor resolving; I am now only able to talk of what I have before thought of, and to practise what I have formerly resolved.

The

The remainder of the day passed away in nearly the same tranquillity, and almost in the same manner as if no sick person was in the house. Eloisa, just as in full health, calm and resigned, talked with the same good sense and the same spirit; putting on, now and then, an air of serenity approaching even to sprightliness. In short, I continued to observe a certain appearance of joy in her eyes, which increased my uneasiness, and concerning which I was determined to come to an explanation.

I delayed it no longer than the same evening: when, seeing I had an inclination to be left alone with her, she told me I had prevented her, for that she had something to say to me. It is very well, replied I, but as I intimated my intention first, give me leave first to explain myself.

Then sitting down by her and looking at her attentively, My Eloisa, said I, my dear Eloisa, you have wounded my very soul. Yes, continued I, seeing her look upon me with some surprize, I have penetrated your sentiments; you are glad to die, you rejoice to leave me. Reflect on my behaviour to you since we have lived together: have I ever deserved on your part so cruel a desire? At that instant she clasped both my hands in hers, and with a voice that thrilled my soul, Who? I! said she, I glad to leave you! Is it thus you penetrate my sentiments? Have you so soon forgot our conversation of yesterday? At least, interrupted I, you die content—I have seen—I see it. Hold, said she, it is indeed true, I die content; but it is content to die, as I have lived, worthy the name of
your

your wife. Ask of me no more, for I can tell you no more: but here, continued she, taking a folded paper from under her pillow, here is what will unfold to you the mystery. This paper was a letter which I saw was directed to you. I give it to you open, added she, giving it into my hands, that after having read it you will determine within yourself, either to send or suppress it, according as you think best. I desire, however, you will not read it till I am no more; and I am certain you will grant that request.

This letter, my dear St. Preux, you will find inclosed. She who wrote it I well know is dead; but I can hardly bring myself to believe that she no longer exists.

She questioned me afterwards, expressing great uneasiness about her father. Is it possible, said she, that he should know his daughter to be in danger and she not hear from him! Has any misfortune happened to him? Or has he ceased to love me? Can it be that my father, so tender a father, should thus abandon his child? that he should let me die without seeing him; without receiving his last blessing; without embracing him in my last moments. Good God! how bitterly will he reproach himself, when he comes to find that he will see me no more!—

This reflection so extremely afflicted her, that I judged she would be less affected to know her father was ill than to suspect his indifference. I therefore determined to acquaint her with the truth, and in fact found her more easy than under her first suspicions. The thoughts of never seeing

ing him again, however, much affected her. Alas ! said she, what will become of him when I am gone ? Shall he live to survive his whole family ! What a life of solitude will his be ? It is impossible he should long survive ! At this moment nature resumed its empire, and the horrors of approaching death were extremely perceptible. She sighed, clasped her hands, lifted up her eyes to heaven ; and, I saw plainly, endeavoured to pray, with all that difficulty which she before observed, always attended the prayers of the sick.

When it was over, she turned to me, and, complaining that she felt herself very weak, told me, she foresaw this would be the last time we should have an opportunity of conversing together. I conjure you, therefore, continued she, by our sacred union, in the name of those dear infants the pledges of our love, harbour no longer such unjust suspicions of your wife. Can I rejoice to leave you ? You, the business of whose life it has been to instruct and make me happy ! you, who of all the men in the world, were the most capable to make me so ; you, with whom only perhaps I could have lived within the bounds of discretion and virtue ! no ! believe me, if I could set any value upon life, it would be that I might spend it with you.—These words, pronounced with great tenderness, affected me to that degree, that as I pressed her hands frequently with my lips, I found them wet with my tears. I never before thought my eyes made for weeping. These tears were the first I ever shed since my birth, and shall be the last till the hour of my death. After having wept
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the last for Eloisa, there is nothing left on earth that can draw from me a tear.

This was a day of great fatigue for poor Eloisa. Her preparation of Mrs. Orbe in the preceding night, her interview with the children in the morning, that with the minister in the afternoon, together with the above conversation with me in the evening, had quite exhausted her. She betook herself to rest, and slept better that night than on the preceding, whether on account of her lassitude, or that in fact her fever and paroxysms were less violent.

Early the next morning, word was brought me that a stranger, very indifferently dressed, desired very earnestly to speak particularly to Eloisa: and though he was informed of her situation, he still continued his importunity, saying, his business related to an act of great charity, that he knew Mrs. Wolmar very well, and that while she had life remaining, she would take pleasure in exerting her benevolence. As Eloisa had established it as an inviolable rule that no person, particularly such as appeared to be in distress, should be turned away, the servants brought me word of the man and his request: on which I ordered him in. His appearance was mean to the greatest degree, being clothed almost in rags, and having in his air and manner all the symptoms of indigence. I did not observe, however, any thing further either in his looks or discourse to make me suspicious of him; though he still persisted in his resolution of telling his business to none but Eloisa. I told him, that if it related to any remedy he might be possessed of, to save her life, I would give him
all

all the recompence he might expect from her, without troubling her in her present extremity. No, Sir, replied he, poor as I am, I desire not your money. I demand only what belongs to me, what I esteem beyond all the treasures on earth, what I have lost by my own folly, and what Mrs. Wolmar alone, to whom I owe it, can a second time restore.

This discourse, though unintelligible, determined me, however, what to do. A designing knave might indeed have said as much, but he could never have said it in the same manner. He required that none of the servants should be present, a precaution which seemed mysterious and strange; I indulged him, and introduced him to Eloisa. He had said that he was known to Mrs. Orbe; he passed by her, however, without her taking notice of him, at which I was a little surprised. Eloisa recollected him immediately. Their meeting was extremely affecting. Clara, hearing a noise, came forward, and soon remembered her old acquaintance, not without some tokens of joy: but these were soon checked by her affliction. One sentiment only engrossed her attention, and her heart was insensible to every thing else.

It is needless, I imagine, to tell you who this person was; a thousand ideas will rise up in your memory and suggest it. But whilst Eloisa was comforting him, however, she was seized with a violent stoppage of her breath, and became so ill that we thought she was going to expire. To prevent any further surprize or distraction, at a time when her relief only was to be thought on, I put the man into the closet,
and

and bid him lock himself in. Fanny was then called up, and after some time Eloisa recovered from her fit; when, looking round and seeing us all in a consternation about her, she said, Never mind, children, this is only an essay; it is nothing like so painful as one would think.

All was soon tranquil again; but the alarm was so great that I quite forgot the man in the closet, till Eloisa whispered me to know what was become of him. This was not, however, till dinner was served up and we were all sat down to table. I would have gone into the closet to speak to him, but he had locked the door on the inside as I had directed him; I was obliged, therefore, to have patience till after dinner.

During our repast, du Bosson, who dined with us, speaking of a young widow who was going to marry again, made some reflections on the misfortunes of widows in general; to which, I replied, the fortune of those was still harder who were widows while their husbands were living. That, indeed, Sir, answered Fanny, who saw this discourse was directed to her, is too true, especially if such husbands are beloved. The conversation then turned upon hers; and, as she always spoke of him very affectionately, it was natural for her to do so now, at a time when the loss of a benefactress threatened to make that of her husband still more severe. This indeed she did in the most affecting terms, commending the natural goodness of his disposition, lamenting the bad examples by which he had been seduced, and so sincerely regretting his loss, that, being sufficiently disposed before to sorrow,

sorrow, she burst out into a flood of tears. At this instant the closet-door flew open, and the poor man, rushing out, threw himself at her feet, embraced her knees and mingled his tears with hers. She was holding a glass in her hand, which immediately fell to the ground ; while the poor creature was so affected with joy and surprise that she had fallen into a fit, had not proper care been instantly taken to prevent it.

What followed is easily imagined. It was known in a moment over the whole house that Claude Anet was come, the husband of our good Fanny ! What a festival ! He was hardly got out of the chamber before he was stripped of his tatters and dressed in a decent manner. Had each of the servants had but two shirts a piece, Anet would soon have had as many as them all. They had indeed so far prevented me that, when I went out with a design to get him equipped, I was obliged to make use of my authority to make them take back the cloaths they had furnished him.

In the mean time Fanny would not leave her mistress. In order, however, to give her an opportunity of an hour or two's conversation with her husband, we pretended the children wanted to take an airing, and sent them both to take care of them.

This scene did not disturb Eloisa so much as the preceding ones. There was nothing in it disagreeable, and it rather did her good than harm. Clara and I passed the afternoon with her by ourselves, and had two hours of calm uninterrupted conversation, which she rendered

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the most agreeable and interesting of any we had ever experienced in our lives.

She opened it with some observations on the affecting scene we had just beheld, and which recalled strongly to her mind the times of her early youth. Then, following the order of events, she made a short recapitulation of the incidents of her life, with a view to shew that, taking it for all in all, she had been fortunate and happy; that she had risen gradually to the highest pinnacle of earthly happiness, and that the accident, which now cut her off in the middle of her days, seemed in all appearance, according to the natural course of things, to mark the point of separation between the good and evil of mortal life.

She expressed her gratitude to heaven in that it had been pleased to give her a susceptible and benevolent heart, a sound understanding, and an agreeable person; in that it had been pleased to give her birth in a land of liberty, and not in a country of slaves; that she came of an honourable family, and not of an ignoble or criminal race; that she was born to a moderate fortune, and not either to the superfluous riches of the great, which corrupt the mind, or to the indigence of the poor, which debases it. She felicitated herself that she was born of parents, both of them good and virtuous, replete with justice and honour, and who, tempering the faults of each other, had formed her judgment on theirs, without subjecting her to their foibles or prejudices. She boasted the advantages, she had enjoyed, of being educated in a rational and holy religion; which, so far

from debasing, elevates and ennobles mankind; which, neither favouring impiety nor fanaticism, permits its professors to make use, at the same time, both of faith and reason, to be at once both devout and humane.

Then, pressing the hand of Clara, which she constantly held in hers, and looking at her with the most affecting tenderness, All these blessings, said she, I have enjoyed in common with others; but this one---this, heaven reserved for me alone; I am a woman, and yet have known a true friend. Heaven gave us birth at the same time; it gave us a similarity of inclinations which has subsisted to this hour: it formed our hearts one for the other; it united us in the cradle; I have been blest with her friendship during my life, and her kind hand will close my eyes in death. Find another example like this in the world, and I have no longer any thing to boast. What prudent advice hath she not given me? from what perils hath she not saved me? under what afflictions hath she not comforted me? what should I indeed have been without her? what should I not have been, had I listened more attentively to her counsel?

Clara, instead of replying, leaned her head on the breast of her friend, and would have stifled her sighs by her tears: but it was impossible. Eloisa embraced her with the most cordial affection, and for a long time a scene of tearless silence succeeded.

When they recovered themselves, Eloisa continued her discourse. These blessings, said she, were mixed with their inconveniencies; such is the lot of humanity! My heart was made for
love;

love; difficult as to personal merit, but indifferent to that of opinion, it was morally impossible that my father's prejudices should ever agree with my inclinations. My heart required a lover of its own peculiar choice, such a one offered himself, I made choice of him, or rather heaven so directed my choice, that though a slave to passion, I should not be abandoned to the horrors of my guilt, and that the love of virtue should still keep possession of my heart, even after I was criminal. He made use of the specious insinuating language of virtue, by which a thousand base men daily seduce our sex; but perhaps he only of all mankind was sincere. Did I then know his heart? ah! no. I then knew no more of him than his professions, and yet I was seduced. I did that through despair which others have done through wantonness: I even threw myself, as my father reproached me, into his arms; and yet he loved and respected me: by that respect alone I began to know him truly. Every man capable of such behaviour must have a noble soul. Then, I might safely have trusted him; but I had done that before, and afterwards ventured to trust in my own strength, and so was deceived.

She then went on to lavish encomiums on the merit of this unhappy lover: I will not say she did him more than justice, but the pleasure she took in it was very obvious. She even praised him at her own expence, and by endeavouring to be just to him, was unjust to herself. She went even so far as to maintain that he held adultery in greater horror than she did; forgetting that he himself had disproved any such suggestion.

All the other incidents of her life were related in the same spirit. The behaviour of Lord B——, her husband, her children, your return, our friendship, every thing was set in the most favourable light. She recapitulated even her misfortunes with pleasure, as accidents which had prevented greater misfortunes. She lost her mother at a time when that loss was peculiarly felt; but if heaven had been pleased to spare her, a disturbance, fatal to the peace of her family, might have been the consequence. The assistance of her mother, feeble as it was, would have been sufficient to strengthen her resolution to resist the will of her father, whence family discord and scandal would have arisen, perhaps some disaster or dishonour, and perhaps still worse if her brother had lived. She had married a man, against her own inclination, whom she did not love; and yet she maintained, that she could not have been so happy with any other man, not even with the object of her passion. The death of Mr. Orbe had deprived her of a friend in the husband, but had restored to her a more amiable one in the wife. She even went so far as to include her uneasiness, her pains, in the number of blessings, as they had served to prevent her heart from being hardened against the sufferings of others. It is unknown, said she, the delight of bemoaning our own misfortunes or those of others. A susceptible mind finds a contentment in itself, independant of fortune. How deeply have I not sighed! how bitterly have I not wept! and yet, were I to pass my life again, the evil I have committed would be all that I would wish retrenched; that which I have
suffered

suffered would be again agreeable. These, St. Preux, were her own words; when you have read her letter, they will perhaps seem more intelligible.

Thus, continued she, you see to what felicity I was arrived. I enjoyed a considerable share of happiness, and had still more in view. The increasing prosperity of my family, the virtuous education of my children, all that I held dear in the world assembled, or ready to be assembled around me. The time present and the future equally flattering, enjoyment and hope united to complete my happiness. Thus raised to the pinnacle of earthly bliss, I could not but descend; as it came before it was expected, it would have taken its flight while I was delighted in the thoughts of its duration. What could Providence have done to have sustained me on the summit of felicity? a permanent situation is not the lot of mankind; no, when we have acquired every thing, we must lose something, though it were from no other cause than that the pleasure of enjoyment diminishes by possession. My father is already in the decline of life; my children of an age when life is very uncertain: how many losses might not hereafter afflict me, without my having it in my power to repair, or console myself under, one! A mother's affection constantly increases, whilst the tenderness of her off-spring diminishes in proportion as they are absent, or reside at a distance from her. Mine, as they grow up, would be taken from me: they would live in the great world, and might neglect me. You intend to send one of them to Russia; how many tears would not his departure and absence

cost me! all by degrees would be detached from me, and I should have nothing to supply their loss. How often should I find myself not in the situation in which I now am going to leave you! and after all, I must still die. Die perhaps the last of you all, alone and forsaken! the longer one lives, the more desirous we are of living, even when our enjoyments are at an end: hence I might survive till life became a burthen, and yet should fear to die; 'tis the ordinary consequence of old age. Instead of that, my last moments are now agreeable, and I have strength to resign myself to death, if death it may be called to leave behind us what we love. No, my friends, my children, think not that I shall leave you; I will remain with you; in leaving you thus united, my heart, my soul, will still reside among you; you will see me continually among you; you will perceive me perpetually near you—the time will also come when we shall be united again; nor shall the virtuous Wolmar himself escape me. My return to God speaks peace to my soul, and sweetens the bitter moment that approaches; it promises me for you also the same felicity. I have been happy, I am still happy, and am going to be so for ever; my happiness is determined, beyond the power of fortune, to all eternity.

Just then the minister entered. Eloisa was truly the object of his respect and esteem; no body knowing better than he the liveliness and sincerity of her belief. He was but too much affected with the conversation he had held with her the day before, and above all with the serenity and

and fortitude he had observed in her. He had often seen persons die with ostentation, but never with such calmness. Perhaps also to the interest he took in her situation was added a little curiosity to see whether such her uncommon serenity would last to the end. Eloisa had no occasion to change the subject of discourse to render it more agreeable to the character of our visitor. As her conversation when in health was never on frivolous topics, so now she continued, on her sick-bed, to talk over with the same tranquillity, such subjects as she thought most interesting to herself and her friends; speaking indifferently on matters by no means indifferent in themselves.

Thus, following the chain of her ideas relative to her notions of remaining with her friends; the discourse turned on the situation of the soul separated from the body: when she took occasion to admire the simplicity of such persons, who promised on their death-beds to come back to their friends, and bring them news of the other world. This, continued she, is just as reasonable, as the stories of ghosts and apparitions, that are said to commit a thousand disorders, and torment credulous good women; as if departed spirits had lungs to scold and hands to fight with *. How is it possible for a
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* Plato says, that the souls of the just, who have contracted no uncleanness on earth, disengage themselves by death of all matter, and recover their original purity. But as to the souls of those who have indulged themselves in filthy and vicious passions, they do not soon recover that purity, but drag along
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pure spirit to act upon a soul inclosed in a body, and which by virtue of its union with such body can perceive nothing but by means of the corporeal organs? this is not to be conceived. I must confess, however, I see nothing absurd in supposing that the soul, when delivered from the body, should return, wander about, or perhaps reside near the persons of such as were dear to it in life: not indeed to inform them of its existence; it has no means of communicating such information; neither can it act on us, or perceive what we act, for want of the organs of sense necessary to that end; but methinks it might become acquainted with our thoughts and perceptions, by an immediate communication similar to that by which the Deity is privy to all our thoughts, and by which we reciprocally read the thoughts of each other, in coming face to face †: for, added she, turning to the minister, of what use can the senses be when there is nothing for them to do? the Supreme Being is neither seen nor understood; he only makes himself felt, he speaks neither to the eyes nor the ears, but only to the heart.

with them certain terrestrial particles, that confine them, as it were, to hover about the receptacles of their bodies. Hence, says he, are seen those apparitions, which sometimes haunt burial places, &c. in expectation of new transmigrations.—— It is a madness common to philosophers in all ages to deny the existence of what is real, and to puzzle their brains to explain what is only imaginary.

† This seems to me to be well expressed; for what can it be to meet the Deity face to face, but to be able to read the supreme intelligence.

I understood, by the answer of the pastor and from some signs which passed between them, that the resurrection of the body had been one of the points on which they had formerly disputed. I perceived also that I now began to give more attention to the articles of Eloisa's religion, where her faith seemed to approach the bounds of reason.

She seemed to take so much pleasure in these notions that, had she not been predetermined to abide by her former opinions, it had been cruelty to endeavour to invalidate one that seemed so agreeable to her in her present condition. What an additional pleasure, said she, have I not an hundred times taken, in doing a good action, in the imagination that my good mother was present, and that she knew the heart and approved the intentions of her daughter! there is something so comfortable in the thoughts of living under the eyes of those who were dear to us, that with respect to ourselves, they can hardly be said to be deceased. You may judge whether Clara's hand was not frequently pressed during this discourse.

The minister had replied hitherto with a good deal of complacency and moderation; he took care, however, not to forget his profession for a moment, but opposed her sentiments on the business of another life. He told her the immensity, glory, and other attributes of God, would be the only objects which the souls of the blessed would be employed in contemplating: that such sublime contemplation would efface every other idea, that we should see nothing, that we should

remember nothing, even in heaven, but that after so ravishing a prospect, every thing earthly would be lost in oblivion.

That may well be, returned Eloisa; there is such an immense distance between the lowness of our thoughts and the divine essence, that we cannot judge what effect it may have on us, when we are in a situation to contemplate its beauty. But, as I have hitherto been able to reason only from my ideas, I must confess that I leave some persons so dear to me, that it would grieve me much to think I should never remember them more. One part of my happiness, say I, will consist in the testimony of a good conscience; I shall certainly remember then how I have acted on earth: if I remember this, I cannot forget those persons who were dear to me; who must be still so: to see † them no more then will be a pain to me, and pain enters not into the mansions of the blest. But if, after all, I am mistaken, says she, smiling, a mistake for a day or two will be soon at an end. I shall know, Sir, in a short time, more on this subject than even yourself. In the mean time, this I am well assured of, that so long as I remember that I have lived on earth, so long shall I esteem those I loved there, among whom my worthy pastor will not have the lowest place.

† It is easy to understand, that by the word *see* is here meant purely an act of the intellect, such as that whereby we are said to see the Deity, and the Deity to see us. We cannot perceive the immediate communication of spirits: but we can conceive it very well; and better, in my opinion, than the communication of motion between bodies.

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In this manner passed the conversation all that day, during which Eloisa appeared to have more ease, more hope and assurance than ever, seeming, in the opinion of the minister, to enjoy a foretaste of that happiness she was going to partake among the blessed. Never did she appear more tender, more amiable, in a word, more herself than at this time; always sensible, sentimental, possessing the fortitude of the philosopher and the mildness of a Christian. Nothing of affectation, nothing assuming or sententious escaped her; her expression always dictated by her sentiments with the greatest simplicity of heart. If sometimes she stifled the complaints which her sufferings might have drawn from her, it was not through affectation of a stoical intrepidity: but to prevent those who were about her from being afflicted; and when the pangs of approaching death triumphed over her strength, she strove not to hide her sufferings, but permitted us to comfort her; and when she recovered from them a little, comforted us in her turn. In the intervals of her pain, she was chearful, but her chearfulness was extremely affecting; a smile sitting frequently on her lips, while the eye ran over with tears. To what purpose is that terror which permits us not to enjoy what we are going speedily to lose? Eloisa was even more pleasing, more amiable than when in health; and the last day of her life was the most glorious of all.

Towards the evening she had another fit, which, though not so severe as that in the morning, would not permit us to leave the children long with her. She remarked, how-

ever, that Harriot looked changed, and though we accounted for it by saying she wept much and eat little, she said, No, her illness was in the blood.

Finding herself better, she would have us sup in her own chamber; the doctor being still with her. Fanny also, whom we always used to send for when we chose she should dine or sup at our table, came up unsent for; which Eloisa perceiving, she smiled and said, Yes, child, come, you shall sup with me to night; you may have your husband longer than you will have your mistress. Then turning to me, she said, I shall have no need to recommend Claud Anet to your protection. No, replied I, whosoever you have honoured with your benevolence needs no other recommendation to me.

Eloisa, finding she could bear the light, had the table brought near the bed, and what is hardly to be conceived of one in her situation, she had an appetite. The physician, who saw no danger in gratifying her, offered her a bit of chicken; which she refused, but desired a bit of fish, which she eat with a little bread, and said it was very good. While she was eating, you should have seen the looks of Mrs. Orbe; you should have seen, I say, for it is impossible to describe them. What she eat was so far from doing her harm, that she seemed the better for it during the remainder of the repast. She was even in such good humour as to take upon her to complain that we had been so long without wine. Bring, says she, a bottle of Spanish wine for these gentlemen. By the looks of the physician,

physician, she saw he expected to taste some genuine Spanish wine, and casting her eyes at Clara, smiled at the conceit. In the mean time Clara, without giving attention to that circumstance, looked with extreme concern, sometimes at Eloisa, and then on Fanny, of whom her eyes seemed to say, or ask something which I could not understand.

The wine did not come so soon as was expected; the valet-de-chambre, who was entrusted with the key of the cellar, having taken it away through mistake. On enquiry, indeed, it was found that the provision intended for one day had lasted five, and that the key was gone without any body's perceiving the want of it, notwithstanding the family had sat up several nights. The physician was amazed, and for my part, at a loss whether I should attribute this forgetfulness to the concern or the sobriety of the servants, I was ashamed to make use of ordinary precautions with such domestics, and therefore ordered the door of the cellar to be broke open, and that for the future every one might drink at their discretion.

At length a bottle was brought us, and the wine proved excellent; when the patient having a mind to taste it, desired some mixed with water; on which the doctor gave her a glass, and ordered her to drink it unmixed. Clara and Fanny now cast their eyes more frequently at each other, but with looks timid and constrained, as if they were fearful of saying too much.

Her fasting, weakness, and ordinary way of living made the wine have a great effect on
Eloisa.

Eloisa. She perceived it, and said she was intoxicated. After having deferred it so long, said she, it was hardly worth while to begin to make me tipsy now, for a drunken woman is a most odious sight. In fact, she began to prattle, sensibly however as usual, but with more vivacity than before. It was astonishing, nevertheless, that her colour was not heightened; her eyes sparkled only with a fire moderated by the languor of her illness; and excepting her paleness she looked to be in full health. Clara's emotion became now extremely visible. She cast a timid look alternately on Eloisa, on me, on Fanny, and above all, on the physician; these were all expressive of so many interrogatories which she was desirous but fearful to make. One would have thought every moment that she was going to speak, but that the fear of a disagreeable reply prevented her: indeed her diffidence appeared at length so great that it seemed oppressive.

Fanny, encouraged by all these signs and willing to relieve her, attempted to speak, but with a trembling voice, faltering out that her mistress seemed to have been in less pain to day—that her last convulsion was not so strong as the preceding—that the evening seemed—and there she stopped. Clara, who trembled like a leaf while Fanny was speaking, now fixed her eyes on the physician, listening with all her attention, and hardly venturing to breathe, lest she should not perfectly understand what he was going to say.

A man must have been stupid not to have guessed the meaning of all this. Du Bosson
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The doctor, however, made no answer, but took up the patient's hand again, examined her eyes and her tongue, and having stood silent a while, said, I understand you, madam; but it is impossible for me to say any thing positively at present, only this, that if the patient is in the same situation at this hour to-morrow morning, I will answer for her life. The words had scarce dropt from his lips before Clara, rushing forward quick as lightning, overturned two chairs and almost the table to get at him, when she hung round his neck and kissed him a hundred times, sobbing and bathing his face with her tears. With the same impetuosity she took a ring of value from her finger, and put it forcibly on his, crying out, as well as she could, quite out of breath, O Sir! if you do but restore her to us, it is not one life only you will be so happy as to save.

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pared? These few words were like a clap of thunder; they immediately extinguished her transports, but could not quite stifle her rekindled hopes.

The doctor's reply to Mrs. Orbe was immediately known throughout the house, and the honest domestics already conceited their mistresses half restored. They unanimously resolved, therefore, to make the doctor a present on her recovery, to which each contributed three months wages, and the money was immediately put into the hands of Fanny; some borrowing of the others what they wanted to make up their quota of the sum. This agreement was made with so much eagerness and haste, that Eloisa heard in her bed the noise of their acclamations. Think, my friend, what an effect this must have had on the heart of a woman, who felt herself dying. She made a sign to me to come near, and whispered in my ear; See how they make me drink to the very bottom that bitter yet sweet cup of sensibility!

When it was time to retire, Mrs. Orbe, who still partook of her cousin's bed, called her woman, to sit up that night to relieve Fanny: the latter however objected to that proposal, and seemingly with greater earnestness than she would have done, had not her husband been come. Mrs. Orbe persisted notwithstanding in her design, and both of them passed the night together in the closet. I sat up in the next chamber, but the hopes which the domestics entertained had so animated their zeal, that neither persuasions nor threats could prevail on one of them to go to bed that night. Thus the whole

whole house sat up all night under so much impatience, that there was not one of the family who would not have gladly given a whole year of his life to have had it nine o'clock in the morning.

I frequently heard them walking in her chamber, during the night, which did not disturb me; but toward the morning when things seemed more quiet and still, I was alarmed at a low, indistinct noise that seemed to come from Eloisa's room. I listened, and thought I could now distinguish the groans of a person in extremity. I ran into the room, threw open the curtain, and there——O St. Preux! there I saw them both, those amiable friends, motionless, locked in each other's embrace, the one fainted away and the other expiring. I cried out, and hastened to prevent or receive her last sigh; but it was too late; Eloisa was no more.

I can give you no account of what passed for some hours afterwards; being ignorant of what befel myself during that time. As soon as I was a little recovered from my first surprise, I enquired after Mrs. Orbe; and learnt that the servants were obliged to carry her into her own chamber, where at last they were forced to confine her to prevent her returning into that of Eloisa; which she had several times done, throwing herself on the body, embracing, chafing, and kissing it in a kind of phrenzy, and exclaiming aloud in a thousand passionate expressions of fruitless despair.

On entering her apartment, I found her absolutely frantic, neither seeing nor minding
any

any thing, knowing nobody, but running about the room, and wringing her hands, sometimes muttering in a hollow voice some extravagant words, and at others sending forth such terrible shrieks as to make one shudder with horror. On the feet of the bed sat her woman, frightened out of her wits, not daring to breathe or stir, but seeking to hide herself and trembling every limb. In fact the convulsions, which at this time agitated the unhappy Clara, had something in them most terrifying. I made a sign that her woman should retire; fearing lest a single word of consolation, untimely offered, might have put her into an actual fury.

I did not attempt therefore to speak to her; as she could neither have listened to or understood me; but observing after some time that her strength was quite exhausted with fatigue, I placed her on a settee; then sitting down by her and holding her hands, I ordered the children to be brought in and called them round her. Unhappily the first she took notice of was him that was the innocent cause of her friend's death. The sight of him I could see made her tremble; her countenance changed, she turned away her looks from him in a kind of horror, and struggled to get her hands loose to push him from her. I called him then to me. Unfortunate boy, said I, for having been too dear to the one, you are become hateful to the other: it is plain their hearts were not in every thing alike. She was extremely angry at what I said, and retorted it severely; it had nevertheless its effect in the impression it made on her. For she immediately took the child up in her arms, and

and attempted to kiss him, but could not, and set him down again immediately. She did not even look upon him with the same pleasure as on the other, and I am very glad it is not this boy which is intended for her daughter.

Ye susceptible minds ! what would you have done in my situation ? Ye would have acted like Mrs. Orbe. After having taken care of the children, and of Clara, and given the necessary orders about the funeral, it was necessary for me to take my horse, and be the sorrowful messenger of the heavy tidings to an unhappy father. I found him still in pain from his hurt, as well as greatly uneasy and troubled about the accident which had befallen his daughter. I left him overwhelmed with sorrow : with the sorrow of the aged, which breaks not out into external appearances, which excites neither transport nor exclamation, but preys inwardly and fatally on the heart. That he will never overcome his grief I am certain, and I can plainly foresee the last stroke that is wanting to complete the misfortune of his friend. The next day I made all possible haste, in order to be at home early, and pay the last honours to the worthiest of women : but all was not yet over. She must be made to revive, to afflict me with the loss of her a second time.

As I drew near my house, I saw one of my people come running out to meet me, who cried out from as far as he could be heard ; Sir, Sir, make haste, make haste, my mistress is not dead. I could not comprehend what he meant ; but made all the haste I could, and found the court yard full of people, crying for joy and calling

calling out aloud for blessings on Mrs. Wolmar. I asked the reason of all this; every one was transported with joy, but nobody could give me a reasonable answer; for as to my own people their heads were absolutely turned. I made the best of my way therefore to Eloisa's apartment, where I found more than twenty persons on their knees round the bed, with their eyes attentively fixed on the corpse, which, to my great surprise, I saw dressed out and lying on the bed: my heart fluttered, and I examined into her situation. But alas! she was dead and cold! This moment of false hope, so soon and so cruelly extinguished, was the most afflicting moment of my whole life. I am not apt to be cholerick, but I found myself on this occasion extremely angry, and resolved to come at the bottom of this extravagant scene. But all was so disguised, so altered, so changed, that I had the greatest difficulty in the world to come at the truth. At length, however, I unravelled the mystery, and thus it was. My father-in-law, being alarmed at the accident he had heard, and thinking he could spare his valet-de-chambre, had sent him over before my arrival to learn the situation of his daughter. This old servant, being fatigued with riding on horse-back, had taken a boat, and, crossing the lake in the night, arrived at Clarens the very morning of the day in which I returned. On his arrival he saw the universal consternation the house was in; and, learning the cause, went sobbing up to Eloisa's apartment; where, throwing himself on his knees, by the bed-side, he wept and contemplated the features of his departed mistress. Then
giving

giving vent to his sorrows, he cried out, Ah! my good mistress! ah! why did it not please God to take me instead of you! me, that am old, that have no connections, that can be of no more service on the face of the earth! but to take you, in the flower of youth, the pride of your family, the blessing of your house, the hope of the unfortunate, alas! was I present at your birth, thus to behold you dead!—

In the midst of these and such like exclamations, which flowed from the goodness and sincerity of his heart, the weak old man, who kept his eyes still fixed on the corpse, imagined he saw it move: having once taken this into his head, he imagined farther that Eloisa turned her eyes, looked at him and made a sign to him with her head. Upon this he rose up in great transport, and ran up and down the house, crying out his mistress was not dead, that she knew him, and that he was sure she was living and would recover. This was sufficient to call every body together; the servants, the neighbours, and the poor, who before made the air resound with their lamentations, now all as loudly cried out in transport, She is not dead! she lives! she lives! the noise spread and increased; the common people, all fond of the marvellous, readily propagated the news: every one easily believed what he wished might be true, and sought to give others pleasure by countenancing the general credulity. So that, in a short time, the deceased was reported not only to have made a motion with her head, but to have walked about, to have conversed, &c.

more

more than twenty witnesses having had ocular proofs of circumstances that never happened or existed. No sooner were they possessed with the notion of her being alive, but a thousand efforts were made to restore her; they pressed in crouds about her bed, spoke to her, threw spirits in her face, felt for her pulse, and did every thing their foolish apprehensions suggested to recover her; till her women, justly offended at seeing the body of their mistress surrounded by a number of men, got every body turned out of the room, and soon convinced themselves how egregiously they had been deceived. Incapable, however, of resolving to put an end to so agreeable an error, or perhaps still hoping for some miraculous event, they clothed the body with care, and though her wardrobe was left to them, they did not spare the richest apparel. After which laying her out on the bed, and leaving the curtains open, they returned to their tears amidst the public rejoicings of the multitude.

I arrived in the height of this phrensy, but when I became acquainted with the cause, found it impossible to bring the crowd to reason; and that if I had shut up my doors, and had ordered the immediate burial of the corpse, it might have occasioned some disturbance; or that I should have passed, at least, for a parricide of a husband who had buried his wife alive, and should have been held in detestation by the whole country. I resolved therefore to defer the funeral. After six and thirty hours however, I found, by the extreme heat of the weather, the corpse began to change, and, though the face preserved its features and sweetness, there

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there seemed even there some signs of alteration. I mentioned it to Mrs. Orbe, who sat in a continued stupor, at the head of the bed. Not that she was so happy as to be the dupe of so gross a delusion; but she pretended to be so, that she might continue in the chamber, and indulge her sorrows.

She understood my design, and silently withdrew. In a moment after, however, she returned, bringing in her hand that veil of gold tissue embroidered with pearls, which you brought her from the Indies*: when, coming up to the bed, she kissed the veil, and spreading it over the face of her deceased friend, she cried out with a shrill voice, "Accursed be that sacrilegious hand which shall presume to lift up this veil! accursed be that impious eye which shall dare to look on this disfigured face!" This action and imprecation had such an effect on the spectators, that, as if by a sudden inspiration, it was repeated by one and all from every quarter. Such an impression indeed did it make on our servants and the people in general, that the deceased being put into the coffin, dressed as she was, and with the greatest

* It is clearly to be seen that the dream of St. Preux, of which Mrs. Orbe's imagination was constantly full, suggested the expedient of the veil. I conceive also that if we examine into matters of this kind strictly, we shall find the same relation between many predictions and their accomplishment. Events are not always predicted because they are to happen; but they happen because they were predicted.

caution,

caution, was carried away and buried in the same attire, without any person daring to touch the veil that covered her face *.

Those are certainly the most unhappy who, beside the supporting their own sorrows, are under the necessity of consoling others. Yet this is my task with my father-in-law, with Mrs. Orbe, with friends, with relations, with my neighbours, and with my own household. I could yet support it well enough with all but my old friend and Mrs. Orbe: but you must be a witness to the affliction of the latter to judge how much it adds to mine. So far from taking my endeavours to comfort her in good part, she even reproaches me for them; my solicitude offends her, and the coldness of my affliction but aggravates hers; she would have my grief be as bitter and extravagant as hers; her barbarous affliction would gladly see the whole world in despair. Every thing she says, every thing she does looks like madness; I am obliged therefore to put up with every thing, and am resolved not to be offended. In serving her who was beloved by Eloisa, I conceive I do a greater honour to her memory than by fruitless tears and lamentations.

You will be able to judge, from one instance, of the rest of her behaviour. I thought I had gained my point, by engaging her to take care of herself, in order to be able to discharge those duties which her dying friend had imposed on her. Reduced very low by convulsions, ab-

* The people of this country, though protestants, are extremely superstitious.

stinence and want of rest, she seemed at length resolved to attempt her usual method of living, and to come to table in the dining-room. The first time, however, I ordered the children to dine in the nursery, being unwilling to run the hazard of this essay in their presence: violent passions of every kind, being one of the most dangerous objects that can be shewn to children. For the passions, when excessive, have always something puerile and diverting to young minds, by which they are seduced to admire what they ought to dread.

On entering the dining-room, she cast her eye on the table, and saw covers laid for two persons only; at which she flung herself into the first chair that stood next her, refusing to come to table. I imagined I knew the reason, and ordered a third plate to be set on the table, at the place where her cousin used generally to sit. She then permitted me to lead her to her seat without reluctance, placing herself with great caution, and disposing her gown as if she was afraid to incommode the empty chair. On putting the first spoonful of soup to her mouth, however, she withdrew it, and asked with a peevish air, what business that plate had there when no body made use of it? I answered, she was in the right, and had it taken away. She then strove to eat, but could get nothing down; by degrees her stomach swelled, her breath grew short, and all at once she started up and returned to her own chamber, without saying a word, or hearing any thing that I said

to her, obstinately refusing every thing but tea all that day.

The next day I had the same task to begin again. I now conceived the best way to bring her to reason was to humour her, and to endeavour to soften her despair by more tender sentiments. You know how much her daughter resembles Mrs. Wolmar; that she took a pleasure in heightening that resemblance, by dressing her in the same manner, having brought several cloaths for her from Geneva, in which she used to dress her like Eloisa. I ordered Harriot therefore to be dressed, as much in imitation of Eloisa as possible, and, after having given her her lesson, placed her at table where Eloisa used to sit; three covers being laid as the day before.

Clara immediately comprehended my design, and was affected, giving me a tender and obliging look. This was the first time she seemed sensible of my assiduity, and I promised myself success from the expedient.

Harriot, proud to represent her little mama, played her part extremely well; so well indeed, that I observed the servants in waiting shed tears. She nevertheless always gave the name of mama to her mother, and addressed her with proper respect. At length, encouraged by success and my approbation, she ventured to put her hand to the soup spoon, and cried, *Clara, my dear, do you chuse any of this!* The gesture, tone and manner, in which she spoke this, were so exactly like those of Eloisa, that it made her mother tremble. A moment after, however, she
burst

burst into a fit of laughter, and offering her plate, replied; Yes, child, give me a little, you are a charming creature. She then began to eat with an eagerness that surprised me. Looking at her with some attention, I saw something wild in her eyes, and a greater impatience in her action and manner than usual. I prevented her therefore from eating any more, and 'twas well I did so; for, an hour after she was taken extremely ill with a violent surfeit, which, had she continued to eat more, might have been fatal. From this time I resolved to try no more projects of this kind, as they might affect her imagination too much. Sorrow is more easily cured than madness; I thought it better therefore to let her suffer under the one a little longer, than run the hazard of driving her into the other.

This is the situation, my friend, in which we are at present. Since the baron's return, indeed, Clara goes up every morning to his apartment, whether I am at home or abroad; where they generally pass an hour or two together. She begins also, to take a little more notice of the children. One of them has been sick; this accident has made her sensible that she has still something to lose, and has animated her zeal to the discharge of her duty. Yet, with all this, she is not yet sufficiently sorrowful; her tears have not yet begun to flow; we wait for you to draw them forth, for you to dry them up again. You cannot but understand me. Think of the last advice of Eloisa; it was indeed first suggested by me, and I now think it more than ever prudent and useful. Come

and be reunited to all that remains of Eloisa. Her father, her friend, her husband, her children, all expect you, all desire your company, which cannot fail of being universally useful.

In a word, without farther explanations, come, partake and cure us of our sorrows; I shall perhaps be more obliged to you than to any other man in the world.

L E T T E R CXLII.

From ELOISA.

This letter was inclosed in the preceding.

OUR projects are at an end. Circumstances, my good friend, are changed: let us bear it without murmuring; it is the will of consummate Wisdom. We pleased ourselves with the thoughts of being reunited; such a re-union was not good for us. The goodness of Providence has prevented it, without doubt to prevent our misery.

Long have I indulged myself in the salutary delusion, that my passion was extinguished; the delusion is now vanished, when it can be no longer useful. You imagined me cured of my love; I thought so too. Let us thank heaven that the deception hath lasted as long as it could be of service to us. In vain, alas! I endeavoured to stifle that passion which inspired me with life; it was impossible, it was interwoven

woven with my heart-strings. It now expands itself, when it is no longer to be dreaded; it supports me now my strength fails me; it cheers my soul even in death. O my friend! I can now make this confession without fear or shame; this involuntary sentiment has been of no prejudice to my virtue, it has never sullied my innocence; I have done my duty in all things that were in my power. If my heart was yours, it was my punishment and not my crime. My virtue is unblemished, and my love has left behind it no remorse.

I glory in my past life: but who could have answered for my future years? perhaps were I to live another day, I should be culpable! what then might I not have been during whole years spent in your company? what dangers have I not run without knowing it? and to how much greater was I going to be exposed? every trial has indeed been made, but trials may be too often repeated. Have I not lived long enough to be happy and virtuous? in taking me hence heaven deprives me of nothing which I ought to regret. I go, my friend, at a most favourable moment; satisfied with you and myself, I depart in peace.

I foresee, I feel your affliction; I know too well you will be left to mourn; the thoughts of your sorrow cause my greatest uneasiness: but reflect on the consolation I leave with you. The obligations left you to discharge on the part of her who was so dear to you, ought to make it your duty to take care of yourself for her sake. You are left in charge with her better half.

You will lose no more of Eloisa than you have long been deprived of. Her better part remains with you. Come and join her family, in the midst of whom Eloisa's heart will still be found. Let every one that was dear to her unite to give her a new being. Your business, your pleasures, your friendship, shall be her own work. The bonds of your union shall give her new life, nor will she totally expire but with the last of her friends.

Think there remains for you another Eloisa, and forget not what you owe her. You are both going to lose the half of yourselves; unite therefore to preserve the other. The only method that remains for you to survive me, is to supply my place in my family and with my children. Oh that I could but invent still stronger bonds to unite those who are so dear to me! but reflect how much you are indebted to each other, and let that reflection strengthen your mutual attachment. Your former objections, against entering into such an engagement, will now become arguments for it. How can either of you ever speak of me without melting into tenderness? No, Eloisa and Clara shall for the future be so united together in your thoughts, that it shall not be in the power of your heart to separate them. Hers will share in every thing yours has felt for her friend; she will become both the confident and object of your passion. You will be happy in the enjoyment of that Eloisa who survives, without being unfaithful to her you shall have lost; and after so many disappointments and misfortunes, shall, before the age of life and love is
past,

past, burn with a lawful flame, and possess the happiness of an innocent passion.

Secured by this chaste union, you will be at liberty to employ your thoughts entirely on the discharge of those duties which I have recommended; after which you need never be at a loss to account for the good you have done on earth. You know there exists also a man worthy of an honour, to which he durst not aspire: you know him to have been your deliverer, as well as the husband of your friend. Left alone, without connections in this life, without expectations from futurity, without joy, without comfort, without hope, he will soon be the most unfortunate of men. You owe to him the same pains he has taken with you, and you know the way to render them successful. Remember the instructions of my former letter. Pass your days with him. Let no one that loved me forsake him. As he restored your taste for virtue, so shew him the object, and the value of it. Be you truly a Christian, to engage him to be one too; the success of the attempt is more probable than perhaps you imagine. He has done his duty, I will do mine, and you must hereafter do yours. God is just, and my confidence in him will not deceive me.

I have but a word or two more to say, concerning my children. I know the trouble their education will cost you; but at the same time I know you will not repine. In the most fatiguing moments of such employment, reflect that they are the children of Eloisa, and every thing will be easy. Mr. Wolmar will put

into your hands the remarks I have made on your essay and on the character of my two sons. They are however unfinished, and I leave them to you, not as rules for your conduct, but submit them as hints to your judgment. Strive not to make my children scholars, but benevolent and honest men. Speak to them sometimes of their mother—you know how dear they were to her—tell Marcellin I die willingly as I saved his life. Tell his brother it was for him I could have wished to live. Tell their—but I find myself fatigued; I must put an end to this letter. In leaving my children with you, I part with you with less regret: for in them I still continue with you.

Farewell, my dear friend! once more farewell. My life ends, alas! as it begun. Perhaps I have said too much at a time when the heart disguises nothing——ah! why should I be afraid to express all I feel? It is no longer I that speak; I am already in the arms of death. Before you read this letter, the worms will be preying on the features of your friend, and will take possession of a heart where your image will be found no more. But can my soul exist without you? without you what happiness can I enjoy? No, we will not part—I go but to expect you. That virtue, which separated us on earth, will unite us for ever in the mansions of the blessed. I die in that peaceful hope; too happy to purchase, at the expence of my life, the privilege of loving you without a crime, and of telling you so once more.

L E T.

L E T T E R CXLIII.

From Mrs. ORBE.

I Am glad to hear that you begin to be so well recovered, as to give us hopes of seeing you soon here. You must, my friend, endeavour to get the better of your weakness; and try to pass the mountains before the winter prevents you. 'The air of this country, will agree with you; you will see here nothing but sorrow; and perhaps our common affliction will be the means of soothing yours. Mine stands greatly in need of your assistance; for I can neither weep, nor speak, nor make myself understood. Mr. Wolmar indeed, understands me, but he makes me no answer. The affliction of an unfortunate father also is buried within himself; nor can any thing be conceived more cruelly tormenting: he neither hears, sees, nor understands any thing. Age has no vent for its griefs. My children affect me without knowing how to be affected themselves. I am solitary in the midst of company; a mournful silence prevails around me; and in the stupidity of my affliction, I speak to no body; having but just life enough in me to feel the horrors of death. O come, you who partake of my loss, come and partake of my griefs. Come, cherish my heart with your sorrow. This is the only consolation I can hope for; the only pleasure I can taste.

But before you arrive, and inform me of your intentions relative to a project which I know has
been

been mentioned to you, it is proper I should inform you first of mine. I am frank and ingenuous, and therefore will dissemble nothing. That I have loved you I confess, nay, perhaps I love you still, and shall always do so: but this I know not, nor desire to know. I am not ignorant that it is suspected, which I do not concern myself about. But what I have to say, and what you ought to observe, is this: that a man who was beloved by Eloisa, and could resolve to marry another woman, would, in my opinion, be so base and unworthy a creature, that I should think it a dishonour to call such a one my friend. And with respect to myself, I protest to you that the man, whoever he be, that shall presume to talk of love hereafter to me, shall never have a second opportunity as long as he lives.

Think then only on the employment that awaits you, on the duties imposed on you, and on her to whom you engaged to discharge them. Her children are growing up apace, her father is insensibly wasting, her husband is in continual agitation of mind: in vain he strives to think her annihilated; his heart rebels against his reason. He speaks of her, he speaks to her, and sighs. Methinks I see already the repeated wishes of Eloisa half accomplished, and that you may put a finishing hand to so great a work. What a motive is here to induce both you and lord B—— to repair hither. It is becoming his noble mind that our misfortunes have not made him change his resolution.

Come

Come then, dear and respectable friends, come and rejoin all that is left of Eloisa. Let us assemble all that was dear to her: let her spirit animate us, let her heart unite ours; let us live continually under her eye. I take a delight in conceiving that her amiable and susceptible spirit will leave its peaceful mansions to revisit ours; that it will take a pleasure in seeing its friends imitate her virtues, in hearing herself honoured by their acknowledgments, in seeing them kiss her tomb, and sigh at the repetition of her name. No, she has not yet forsaken those haunts which she used to make so delightful. They are still full of her. I see her in every object, I perceive her at every step; every hour of the day I hear her well-known voice. It was here she lived, here died, and here repose her ashes—As I go, twice a week, to the church, I cast my eye on the sad, revered spot—O beauty! is such thy last asylum!—sincerity! friendship! virtue! pleasure! innocence! all lie buried in her grave—I feel myself drawn as it were involuntarily to her tomb—I shudder as I approach—I dread to violate the hallowed earth—I imagine that I feel it shake and tremble under my feet—that I hear a plaintive voice call me from the hollow tomb—Clara*! where art thou?

* After having read these letters several times over, I think I have discovered the reason why the interest, which I imagine every well-disposed reader will take in them, though perhaps not very great,
is

thou? Clara! why dost thou not come to thy friend?—Alas! her grave hath yet but half her ashes—it is impatient for the remainder of its prey—yet a little while, and it shall be satisfied!

is yet agreeable: and this is, because, little as it may prove, it is not excited by villainies or crimes, nor mixed with the disagreeable sensations of hatred. I cannot conceive what pleasure it can give a writer, to imagine and describe the character of a villain; to put himself in his situation as often as he represents his actions, or to set them in the most flattering point of view. For my part, I greatly pity the authors of many of our tragedies, so full of wickedness and horror, who spend their lives in making characters act and speak, which one cannot see or hear without shuddering. It would be to me a terrible misfortune to be condemned to such labour; nor can I think but that those who do it for amusement must be violently zealous for the amusement of the public. I admire their genius and talents; but I thank God, that he has not bestowed such talents upon me.

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